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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE CHILDREN IN TRANSITION (CIT) PROGRAM: AN EVALUATION OF A PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN OF DIVORCE

BY

CORINNE JUNE WHELAN

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "The Children In Transition (CIT) Program: An Evaluation of a Program For Children of Divorce" submitted by Corinne June Whelan in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Counseling Psychology.

.....

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Date: October 11, 1989

TO MY HUSBAND, KEN, FOR HIS ENCOURAGEMENT

AND TO OUR CHILDREN,

JENNIFER, AMANDA, GREGORY AND SPENCER

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the Children In Transition (CIT) program developed by the researcher for children of separation and divorce in grades four to six (9-12 years). The eight session program encouraged children to address Wallerstein and Kelly's (1983) key divorce-related psychological tasks and to explore the process of grieving in relation to the loss of the family of origin. Two distinct phases were employed for the study: Phase I (evaluative) and Phase II (experimental).

Phase I: Five elementary students (grades 4-6) whose parents were either separated or divorced participated in the CIT program. Three qualified outside evaluators viewed video-taped sessions and provided evaluations of the objectives, content and approach. Combined results on each criterion indicated that the overall objectives of the CIT program were addressed. The client-centered counseling approach was advocated and results indicated that this counseling approach was established in the sessions. Parents and students completed program evaluations and they expressed satisfaction with the intervention. Students reported that they no longer blamed themselves for the divorce and that they were better able to express their feelings. The parents reported that their children felt better about themselves, were more confident, were better able to discuss feelings and problems and that they realized the divorce was not their fault. A revision of the CIT program was completed based on the feedback from the outside evaluators, students and parents.

Phase II: Ten elementary students (grades 4-6) whose parents were either separated or divorced participated in the revised CIT program and involved an experimental group (n=5) and control group (n=5). The

experimental assessment focused on the following two hypotheses: (1) There will be no significant difference between self-esteem scores of the treatment and control groups after participation in the treatment program. (2) There will be no significant difference between divorce adjustment scores of the treatment and control groups after participation in the treatment program. Self-esteem was indicated by children's scores on the Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI), Form B (Battle, 1981) and divorce adjustment was indicated by children's scores on the researcher devised Children's Attitude Towards Divorce (CATD) questionnaire (untested). To test the hypotheses, the data were analyzed using a two-way analysis of variance with repeated measures and a nonequivalent control group design was utilized. No significant differences were noted in self-concept or divorce adjustment scores between experimental and control groups following the program. One of five subscales on the self-esteem scale, that of parental related self-esteem, was significant at the .008 level of confidence. However, this result should be interpreted with caution because of the small number of items on the subtest (n=5). Although not significant, slight positive trends were noted in global self-esteem and the general and school-related self-esteem subscales. Although the null hypotheses were accepted, overall results suggested that the CIT program enhanced improvements in the area of parent-child interactions and in the students' perception of that interaction.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

An increasing number of families involving children are going through transitions in the form of parental separation and divorce, one-parent households and remarriage (Spanier and Glick, 1981). The most recent figures available indicate that in 1985 there were 61,980 divorces in this country involving 56,336 children (Statistics Canada, 1986). Norton and Glick's (1986) analysis projects that 60% of American children will live in a single parent family before reaching 18 years of age. In Canada there was a 20% increase in lone-parent families between 1981 and 1986. In 1986, lone-parent families represented 13% of all families, up from 11% in 1981 (Statistics Canada, 1986). An estimated 40-50% of children born in the 1980's will spend some time in a single-parent home (Robson, 1987). If statistical trends persist, more than half of school-aged children will be the offspring of divorced or separated couples by the end of this decade. The research study will address the perceived need for intervention services for children involved in family transition in the form of parental separation or divorce. The emphasis of the study will be (1) to evaluate and further develop an intervention program for children of divorce developed by the researcher, and (2) to investigate the efficacy of the revised intervention program. The present chapter provides the general orientation and context for the research study. Chapter I is divided into the following sections: Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study and Questions, General Orientation, Definitions and Limitations.

Statement of the Problem

The traditional structure of a family unit as a set of parents and children has been replaced by various family patterns including single parents, separated, divorced, widowed, adoptive and blended or remarried families. Children today are likely to grow up experiencing more than one family pattern. Ahrons (1980) reported that the process of divorce for children can be viewed as a series of transitions that mark a family's change from two co-habiting parents to a single-parent family.

Wilkinson and Bleck (1977) stated that, "For the most part, children of divorce are healthy, normal children who are usually confronted with an extremely stressful situation" (p. 206). Of the thirty-five life change events in elementary age children which required social adjustment, Coddington (1972) found that the events of parental separation and divorce required the greatest amount of readjustment. Often children are expected to work through a wide range of issues on their own in divorcing families (Bonkowski, Bequette and Boomhower, 1984). Benedek and Benedek (1979) reported that although there is much variance in the nature and amount of assistance required, all children affected by divorce need at least some supportive services for some time.

The nature and extent of the child's reactions to divorce or separation is related to the developmental stage of the child at the time of the divorce (Bonkowski, Bequette and Boomhower, 1984; Hetherington, Cox and Cox, 1976; Kelly and Berg, 1978; Kelly and Wallerstein, 1976; Wallerstein, 1985b; Wallerstein and Kelly, 1974,

1976, 1980) and researchers agree that intervention and focus of treatment should be orientated to the developmental stage of the child (Cantor, 1979; Kurdek, 1981; Magrab, 1978; Robson, 1982; Robson, 1987; Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980).

Wallerstein and Kelly's 10-year, longitudinal study of 131 children from 60 families of divorce from middle-class families in Marin County, California (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1976; Wallerstein, 1983) was based on in-depth clinical interviews with parents and children during and after the divorce, and again at 1-,5-, and 10-year follow-up points. Although generalizations based on that work were restricted by sampling limitations, the study's in-depth longitudinal approach provided needed clinical data. The conclusion reached was that long-term adjustment for children of divorce depended on intrafamilial (e.g., support) variables and the ability to master the following divorce-related psychological tasks (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1983):

a. acknowledge the reality of the marital rupture,

b. disengage from parental conflict and distress and resume customary pursuits,

c. resolve the loss (difficult to accomplish and resolution of this task can last many years),

d. resolve anger and self-blame,

e. accept the permanence of divorce, and

f. achieve realistic hope regarding relationships.

Wallerstein (1983) postulated that successful resolution of these tasks can result in closure to the divorce experience, independence, and an increased capacity to trust and love. The basic problem in the

present study will be to address the perceived need for intervention services based on the current trends for children involved in parental separation or divorce.

Purpose of the Study and Questions

The purpose of the study is to (1) further develop an intervention program developed by the researcher entitled "Children In Transition (CIT), which is designed to explore divorce related issues of concern to older elementary school-aged children (9-12 years); and (2) to investigate the relationship between participation in the revised CIT program and children's measures of self-esteem and divorce adjustment. Results of the study will provide a contribution to the existing body of research in the area of intervention services for children of divorce and in doing so, the following questions will guide the investigation:

1. Will there be a change in the child's self-concept after participation in the treatment program?
2. Will there be a change in the child's divorce adjustment after participation in the treatment program?

General Orientation

Two basic premises of the present study are that family transition creates a permanent loss of the structure to which the family members are accustomed and that children need the opportunity to express and clarify their unresolved need for the original family unit (Wallerstein, 1977). The rationale for the study is that few group intervention programs for children of divorce address the loss and grieving issues

related to the original family, although resolving the loss is a key psychological task (Wallerstein, 1983). Further, although children have been identified as a major group for preventive intervention, research indicates that few intervention programs have been developed that provide a comprehensive theoretical model in terms of frame of reference, counseling approach, and foundations for techniques employed. Another orientation of the study is to determine the efficacy of the revised intervention program on child measures of self-esteem and divorce adjustment.

Definitions

The purpose of this section is to present definitions to guide the research. For the purpose of this study, divorce will be operationally defined as a legal dissolution of marriage which enables the husband and wife to live apart, and involves a family transition that demands a change in family structure, rules, and roles. Separation will operationally be defined as a legal process which enables the husband and wife to live apart, and involves a family transition that demands a change in family structure, rules, and roles. Group counseling will operationally be defined as " the use of group interaction to facilitate self-understanding as well as individual behavior change" (Dustin and George, 1973, p. 235).

Definitions of the measures selected for the study include self-esteem and divorce adjustment. Self-esteem is indicated by children's scores on the Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI), Form B (Battle, 1981). The operational definition of self-esteem for the

study is a composite score adding scores on general self-esteem, social or peer-related self-esteem, academics or school-related self-esteem, and parents or home-related self-esteem items. Divorce adjustment is indicated by children's scores on the researcher devised Children's Attitude Towards Divorce (CATD) questionnaire (Whelan, 1988) and the operational definition of divorce adjustment for the study is a composite score on commonly cited attitudinal responses including the following affective reactions: self-blame, hope for reunification, anger, aloneness and sadness items. The measures include indicators of the children's self-esteem and divorce adjustment as perceived by the children themselves. More information on the measures and their subscales is provided in Chapter IV.

Limitations

Limitations arise when considering the nature of the sample population and the results may have limited generalizability due to the following sample characteristics: the sample was not random and too small to generalize. The sample was not random because principals and parents had to agree to participate in the study. Sample size was limited by the optimal group size for the 9-12 age group, which was six children per group. Also, the instrument used to measure child divorce adjustment has not been tested for reliability and validity.

Organization of Thesis

To provide direction for the research study, Chapter I has presented the problem, purpose, questions, orientation and definitions, and limitations of the study. Chapter II will be a review of the theory and related research. Chapter III will present the development of the Children In Transition (CIT) intervention program. Chapter IV will present the method and design of the research study. The results of the evaluative phase of the study involving the evaluation and revision of the CIT program and the results of the experimental phase of the study involving the hypotheses tested will be presented in Chapter V. A discussion of the results will be the topic for Chapter VI.

CHAPTER II

THEORY AND RELATED RESEARCH

The purpose of the present chapter is to review existing literature and research on children experiencing parental divorce with emphasis on the experience of older elementary school-aged children (9-12 years). The relationship between self-esteem and parental divorce is reviewed. In addition, the review includes literature on group counseling including therapeutic elements in group counseling, and considerations for children in group counseling and research on group interventions for children of divorce. A section on conceptualizing a comprehensive model of intervention is included in the review to provide information on specific theoretical orientations of the CIT group intervention program.

The review of literature and research is organized according to the following sections: The Divorce Experience of Children (9-12 years), Children's Self-Esteem and Divorce, Group Counseling, Group Interventions and Children of Divorce, and Conceptualizing a Comprehensive Model of Intervention. In the review, general information and specific experimental studies will be discussed. The chapter will conclude with hypotheses based on the information and knowledge currently existing in the research literature.

The Divorce Experience of Children (9-12 years)

Researchers found that when a child experiences parental divorce, the psychological reactions are related to the developmental stage and age of the child (Bonkowski, Bequette and Boomhower, 1984; Wallerstein

and Kelly, 1985, Wallerstein, 1983). Themes that emerged in the literature for children between 10-12 years were anxiety over parental fighting, loyalty conflicts, self-blame, worry about custody decisions, loss of family and loss or partial loss of the leaving parent, worry and anger about the parent's dating, and concern about stepparents' discipline (Kalter, Pikar and Lesowitz, 1984).

It was found that children aged 9-12 years for example, had strong feelings about anger and problems of anger expression; they also felt a sense of shame and of being different and isolated from peers; often felt divided loyalties between parents, and often had a strong desire for parental reconciliation. Robson (1987) found that shock, surprise, denial, incredulity, and disbelief were characteristic of children in the older school-age group and stated that, "...some hang on for years to the image of one parent as all good and the other parent as all bad." (p.3) The single feeling most expressed by children in the 9-12 age group was intense anger, which was often directed at the parent perceived to have caused the divorce (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1976, 1980; Bonkowski, Bequette and Boomhower, 1984).

It was found that many children in this age range never talked to their friends of parental separation because of their own feelings of shame, loneliness and rejection (Wallerstein and Kelly, 1976). Children were often concerned about the emotional stability of their parents, and were less likely to speak of their own fear, anger and sadness (Bonkowski, Bequette and Boomhower, 1984). Wallerstein (1985) reported that children in the 9-12 years age group suffered with grief over the

loss of the intact family with anxiety, loneliness, and a great sense of powerlessness.

Children's Self-Esteem and Divorce

Although considerable attention has been given to the construct self-esteem, no standard theoretical or operational definition exists. It was generally agreed that self-esteem was the evaluative component of the self-concept (Lian-Hwang, 1988). For example, Coopersmith (1967) defined self-concept as "the totality of perceptions a person has about himself which are most vital to the individual himself and that seem to that individual to be 'me' at all times and places, and defined self-esteem as "an expression of approval or disapproval indicating the extent to which a person believes himself to be capable, successful, significant and worthy." (Battle, 1982, p. 22).

Rogers (1959) believed that as the individual matures, experiences are differentiated into a conscious perception of self-as-object, which he calls the self-concept. Once formed, the self-concept influences the perceptions, thoughts, and memories of the individual. The individual's self-esteem is influenced by early experiences with significant other people (usually parents). According to Rogers (1959), parents should provide unconditional positive regard for their children and communicate to the child that he is loved, accepted, and wanted, simply because he 'is', to enhance positive self-perception. Battle (1982) defined self-esteem as the perception the individual possesses of his own self-worth and he indicated that self-concept represents a totality of one's perceptions, whereas self-esteem was one dimension of that

totality. For the purpose of this study, self-esteem will be a term used to refer to an individual's perception of his own worth (Battle, 1981, p.26).

Research indicated that parental divorce often affects children's self-identity and self-esteem, which is closely tied to the family and to their parents. Cooper, et al. (1983) studied 258 boys and 209 girls aged 9-12 years and found that children reporting little family support, whether in one-or two-parent families, had lowest self-esteem. A series of studies was conducted and it was found that children in divorced, non-remarried families had lower self-esteem than children in intact families (Parish and Dostal, 1980; Parish and Taylor, 1979). Parish and Taylor (1979) studied 406 boys and girls in grades 3-8 and found that children whose parents had divorced and whose mothers had not remarried had significantly lower self-concepts than children in intact families. Parish, Dostal and Parish (1981) found that boys from divorced families had the lowest self-concepts and girls from intact families had the highest self-concepts of the sample. They concluded that intactness of the family was important to the self-concept of children. Measuring children's self evaluations in 1979 and again in 1982, Parish and Wigle (1985) found that children who had the highest evaluations were those whose family structure was intact throughout the study, while those whose parents divorced in the intervening years experienced declining self-evaluations. Some studies suggest that divorce per se may not adversely affect children's self-concept but that parental discord is negatively related to children's self-esteem (Amato, 1986; Long, 1986).

By having a more positive self-concept, a child can deal more effectively with his or her own problems and behavior. Wallerstein and Kelly (1976) found self-esteem to be an important factor in healthy post-divorce adjustment. Further, Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) indicated the importance of variables like parent-child interaction before the break-up, the extent of extended family support and other network support, and the length of time that had elapsed since the break-up.

Group Counseling

Gazda (1978) indicated that group counseling was growth engendering, prevention and remediation orientated and suggested that attitude change, behavior change, and changes in cognitive processing were examples of potential goals of group counseling. For the purpose of this research, group counseling will be defined as " the use of group interaction to facilitate self-understanding as well as individual behavior change " (Dustin and George, 1973, p. 235).

Sonstegard and Dreikers (1973) advocated group counseling with elementary school children. According to Robson (1982), children's groups on divorce led by elementary school counselors have been successful. One of the basic benefits of the these groups was the development of individual problem-solving skills that could be applied at school and at home. Further, it has been found that group counseling could help diffuse feelings and offer a supportive environment as the children learn that others are experiencing similar concerns (Kurdek, 1981; Sonnenshein- Schneider and Baird, 1980; Stolberg and Garrison, 1985).

Some general goals were suggested for children's groups that deal with divorce (Guerney and Jordan, 1979; Wilkinson and Bleck, 1977). Although each group was unique in terms of needs and composition they indicated that the group should be designed to:

1. Deal with the developmental responses of children.
2. Help the children label and understand their feelings about the divorce.
3. Help the children realize that others are having similar feelings and experiences.
4. Help the children gain an accurate picture of the divorce process.
5. Assist the children in learning new coping skills to deal with the feelings associated with divorce.
6. Help children feel good about themselves and their parents through self-disclosure, peer support, and the leader's empathetic understanding.

Therapeutic Elements

In order to facilitate a successful group experience, it is important that a group leader attempt to understand those therapeutic elements which contribute, or interfere with group effectiveness. Bloch (1986) defined a therapeutic factor as "an element occurring in group therapy that contributes to improvement in a patient's condition and is a function of the actions of the group therapist, the patient, or fellow group members ". (p.679) George and Dustin (1986) believed the following to be the essential elements that contribute to therapeutic effectiveness in a counseling group:

1. Installation of hope. Through this therapeutic element the group member gains a sense of optimism about his or her progress or potential for progress. The installation and maintenance of hope is crucial since it is required to keep the member in the group. It is important that the group leader believe in himself and the efficacy of the group and that in sharing these beliefs he can help group members. To help maintain this hope it is important that group members understand those expectations for group membership ie. the willingness to discuss their problems openly.

2. Sense of safety and support. George and Dustin (1986) indicate that part of this sense of safety and security results from a feeling of genuine acceptance by other group members. Group acceptance enhances self-esteem and involves the affirmation of the individual's right to have his or her own feelings and values and to express them. It also involves demonstrated caring, which is sensed when individuals believe that others are listening to them and have an involvement in their concerns. Two behaviors or effects are likely to occur when group members feel their sense of trust, safety and support: self-disclosure and catharsis. Through self-disclosure a member is able to receive understanding, and acceptance from the group leader and group members. The open expression of strong feelings (catharsis) often provides relief for the individual and is a major step in the individual's feeling understood and accepted, which provides the kind of bonding that enables the group to work honestly together.

3. Cohesiveness. When a group has a sense of togetherness or cohesivensess, group members are more likely to become involved.

Intimacy and empathy are two factors that may contribute to the importance of cohesiveness as part of the therapeutic process. Intimacy develops in a group as members experience closeness and a sense of trust in others. Part of cohesiveness is empathy since it involves a deep understanding of another's concerns. A cohesive bond can be formed in the group setting with the realization that one is not alone and the certain problems- loneliness, hurt, fear, anger- are commonalities among group members that unite them. Cohesiveness also involves the concept of altruism, which is that part of the therapeutic process where the individual is offering help to other group members.

4. Universality. This is the sense that one is not unique in one's problems and that others share these problems. With the self-disclosure of group members there is often a sense of relief that one is not alone and a growing insight into the nature of one's own problems.

5. Vicarious Learning. George and Christiani (1986) indicate that group members are exposed to interpersonal relationship skills being modeled by both the group leader and the other group members. Modeling can be used in group counseling sessions as a means of demonstrating desireable behavior before the group members try out the new behavior, with the group providing feedback. The emphasis on social learning as a major therapeutic technique has been demonstrated by Bandura, Ross, and Ross (1963).

6. Interpersonal Learning. Group members become more aware of their own responsibility for what happens in their interpersonal worlds as they become fully aware of the impact of their behavior upon (a) the feelings of others, (b) the opinions that others have of them, and (c) the

opinion they have of themselves. To facilitate interpersonal learning the group leader must focus on the group interactions and the immediate experience in the group that involves both an affective and cognitive component. Group members not only share emotional experiences, they attempt to understand and integrate the meaning of that experience that they have just undergone. Various techniques are required by the group leader to facilitate emotional experiencing and awareness of what each is experiencing. This can be facilitated by genuine self-disclosure of the group leader's own experiencing, and also by focusing on "group process", involving reflection, explanation, interpretation, and an awareness of the total group experience both verbal and nonverbal.

Considerations For Children In Group Counseling

George and Dustin (1986) indicate that although basic principles of group counseling apply to all ages, the group counselor must adapt his or her techniques for children's groups specific to children's social, emotional, and intellectual development, as well as children's ability to communicate. Certain considerations included group size, for example, the younger the group the smaller the group needed to be. Another consideration was length of session, therefore, the group leader working with children must assess the attention span of the children and adapt the time of the session to meet the children's needs.

Another issue in using group approaches to counseling children was the issue of trust (George and Dustin, 1986, p. 137). Children's ability to communicate thoughts and feelings is less developed, therefore, the group leader must understand the vocabulary, language development, and

family background. Also emphasized was the group leader's ability to be sensitive to the child's search for expressive words, ability to listen empathetically, and the ability to teach children the vocabulary for self-expression.

Group Interventions for Children of Divorce

Assistance to children experiencing parental separation and divorce in the form of group counseling has become more evident. Programs have generally been available through various social service organizations in communities. In order to reach as many children as possible, group interventions have increasingly taken place in schools. Although the groups have varied in time frame, ages of children, and format, goals of these groups have consistently been to provide the child with support, emotional healing, and information.

Early efforts at using group models with children of divorce found the most helpful mode of support for children was small groups led by a counselor (Cantor, 1979; Hammond, 1979). Participants learned they can share similar experiences and feelings, especially through the anger and guilt phases of adjustment, and they are not alone.

A variety of approaches have been used with children's divorce groups. Members of one group for children in third through sixth grades wrote and performed a play for their parents depicting scenes of fighting, separating, going to court, and developing new relationships (Cantor, 1979). The parents were contacted by questionnaire at the end of the group and results indicated that the children had not discussed the group with them and behavior changes were subtle. It was reported

that the children responded to the group by moving from feeling ashamed about parental divorce to one of openess and a desire to share experiences.

Green (1978) developed a multimodal approach with activities ranging from health information to exploring emotions and relationships. Wilkinson and Bleck (1977) developed a group based on discussion of topics such as feelings, problems the children encountered, and activities related to understanding themselves and their reactions to the divorce. These groups typically used post-group interviews to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs. The reactions to these groups appeared to be positive with the findings being based on subjective reports from the students, parents, and teachers.

Kalter, Pikar and Lesowitz (1984) reported on an eight-session intervention school-based program of group counseling for 10-12 years olds using a post-group evaluation. They noted that several themes were common: conflict over loyalties and anxiety over possible change in custody; anxiety over parental battles; sadness over the loss of the original family and less contact with the father, and anger at the mother's new boyfriend or husband over discipline. Four out of six groups with eight children in each were evaluated for child and parent satisfaction which was high, however, no control groups were available.

Nevins (1981) offered a four session group treatment program for 27 children between the ages of 10 and 13 years. A posttest only control group research design was utilized. Results indicated that children who participated in the intervention were significantly less withdrawn than children who did not participate. Two further trends indicated that

children in the experimental group were less anxious about the divorce and had a greater sense of personal worth than children in the control group.

Stolberg and Garrison's (1985) 12 week program involved (a) a group intervention for 7-13 year old children of divorce emphasizing support and the building of communication, anger control, and relaxation skills and (b) a parent group based on support and discussions orientated to participants as individuals and as parents. Subjects in the study consisted of pairs of divorced mothers and their children assigned either to the previously mentioned conditions alone, a combined parent-child intervention, or a no-program control group. Outcome comparisons at the end of the intervention and five months later indicated that children in the support group alone improved most in self-concept (Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale) and that parents in the parent group alone condition improved most in adjustment when compared to the no-treatment control group. The combined intervention was not more powerful than the separate interventions for the children and parents.

Adapting Stolberg and Garrison's (1985) model, Pedro-Carroll and Cowan (1985) studied 72 fourth to six grade children of divorce who were randomly assigned to an immediate intervention (experimental) or delayed intervention (control) group. The focus of their 10 week support group was to provide support for feelings and thoughts about the divorce and teach specific coping skills around personal problem solving, anger, self-control, and communication skills. They found that the experimental group improved significantly more on teacher ratings of problem

behaviors and competence and parent ratings of adjustment and self-reported anxiety.

Ferrante (1985) studied the effects of a group counseling program for children of divorce on the variables of locus of control, social problem-solving and parent-child relationships. A total sample of 22 students from grades 4, 5 and 6 participated in this study, with participants experiencing parental divorce in the last 6 years. Results did not demonstrate any treatment-control group differences on either the locus of control measure or the social problem-solving measure. Communication about divorce between child and parent appeared to have been facilitated as a result of the treatment program. Both parents and children reported more communication with each other around divorce-related topics, as well as satisfaction with the group.

Freeman (1984) found that children who participated in an eight week semi-structured educational group were significantly better adjusted than their wait-listed controls. It was reported that the children showed improved in-class behavior; that they had developed more specific coping strategies and responses to stress, and that their parents found them more achievement orientated.

Freeman and Couchman (1985) offered a six week group program to 82 children between 8-12 years of age as well as a program for the resident parent. An atmosphere to elicit feelings, fears, questions and successful coping strategies was encouraged in both groups, with the main focus being on mutual self-help. Through the interview technique the researchers found that the children in the experimental group showed evidence of gain in accepting and adapting to parental separation, and

that the parents had felt they were helped personally, especially with enhanced parent/child relationships.

Prins (1985) developed and evaluated an educational therapeutic group procedure to assist pre-adolescent children to understand parental divorce. Results of the process evaluation indicated a high degree of acceptance by pre-adolescent children who experienced the group. A posttest design using the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale as the dependent variable indicated that no significant differences were noted in global self-concept scores between experimental and control group.

Conceptualizing a Comprehensive Model of Intervention

To assist children in successfully mastering the psychological tasks following divorce, specific theoretical orientations of the CIT model were utilized in the development of the program. The purpose of this section of the review is to examine loss-related literature related to children and divorce. Information presented comes from general reviews of research on divorce and the grieving process. Another purpose of this section is to examine the theoretical counseling approach, as well as the theoretical foundation for the techniques employed in the CIT program.

Theoretical Frame of Reference

The theoretical frame of reference in the CIT program development was Kubler-Ross's (1969) stages of loss theory, which involves stages in the mourning process of shock, denial, anger, bargaining, depression,

and acceptance. Wallerstein and Kelly (1977) indicated that like death, divorce involves a complex emotional response to the loss of a relationship and the loss involved in the process of divorce parallels the loss involved with death. Not unlike death, family transition creates a permanent loss of the structure to which the family members are accustomed. They indicated that although the family as the child knew it and grew up in it has died, in contrast to death, the two parents live on and their presence- or absence- continues to be a factor in the child's development. They reported that the stages of accepting death are operative in the child's process of accepting parental divorce- the death of the child's family. Wallerstein and Kelly (1977) indicated that children need the opportunity to express and clarify their ambivalence toward, and unresolved need for the original family unit.

Loss-related literature pertaining to children mostly centres around death concerns and very little is written around other types of losses such as divorce. Frears and Schneider (1981) found that although there is literature about adult losses and the changing family, little attention has been given to the thoughts or feelings of children as they experience new forms of family organization. They reported factors such as psychological, social, interpersonal, intrapsychic and intrafamilial need to be viewed to assess how the child is reacting to grief issues differently from adults. For example, they suggested adults frequently deny children opportunities to learn about loss by rationalizing that they are sparing the feelings of the child by not sharing facts and emotions. Thus, children may find loss confusing and act out instead of

expressing their own feelings. They also reported children under 10 years of age do not have the cognitive capacities to recognize and resolve losses, which made them more vulnerable to making incorrect assumptions regarding the reality of the loss. They also suggested that because children lack adult means for resolving crisis- economic, emotional and social, and adults make choices to leave or stay, children may experience difficulty in limiting their helplessness (awareness) or in resolving the loss (completions).

Krantzer (1975) noted that children go through the same steps in the mourning process as adults, which involved the separation shock; the denial; the eruption of strong anger, hostility , and guilt; the withdrawal; the gradual testing of new reality; and the letting go of the two-parent, single household family relationship.

Hozman and Froiland (1976) adapted the stages of Kubler-Ross' loss model to the separation process experienced by those in divorce. They found children tend to experience the same basic stages in their emotional response to divorce as do their parents: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Their model involved five stages in which the first stage was denial and the reality of the divorce was not yet accepted. Anger was the second stage where the child began to face the hosility towards self and toward those who have left his/her world. Stage three involved bargaining and the child trying to get his or her own way through anger or temper tantrums. Stage four involved depression where the child became depressed as a result of the inability to control or modify the parent's choice to divorce. The final stage was

acceptance, where the children must accept situations which they cannot control but which definitely have a major effect upon their lives.

Kelly and Wallerstein (1980) studied both adults and children five years after the divorce and found 25% of the children resilient (those for whom the divorce was successfully resolved); half to be still in the process coping when and as they could; and 25% pathologically stopped in the grief process. They suggested unresolved losses from childhood may be factors often unrecognized that bring adults into counseling.

To mitigate the effects of divorce on children, the CIT program will encourage children to explore the process of grieving in relation to the loss of the original family. Bonkowski, et al. (1984) state that, "...it is therapeutic for children to be with others who are experiencing similar losses due to the breakup of the family." (p.137)

Theoretical Counseling Approach

The theoretical counseling approach involved in the Children In Transition program is based on Carl Rogers' client-centered approach, whose main objective is to create a warm, nurturing, safe environment in order to bring about positive change (Rogers, 1961). The unconditional positive regard the group leader has for each group member is important to this approach.

Roger's client-centered approach views individuals as basically rational, forward-moving, socialized and realistic. Rogers (1961) advocates that when individuals are free from defensiveness, their reactions are constructive, positive and forward moving. He asserts that when the individual is provided with reasonable conditions for growth,

the individual's potential will be developed constructively. Extremely important to this approach is the philosophical orientation of the group leader which should include an attitude of respect for the individual; a belief in the individual's capacity and right to self direction; and, recognition of the worth and significance of each individual.

The conditions of the therapeutic process in relation to Rogers' client-centered approach are as follows (Patterson, 1980):

(1) A counseling group is in contact with a group leader.

(2) Group members are in a state of incongruence. Patterson indicates that "Congruence is the accurate matching of physiological experiencing with awareness and the matching of these with what is communicated. When congruence is lacking, there is ambiguity in communication; words do not match nonverbal communication. This is often not recognized by the individual experiencing it". (p.485)

(3) The group leader is in congruence in his or her relationship with group members.

(4) The group leader experiences unconditional positive regard toward the group members. This involves the perception of the self-experience of others without discrimination as to greater or lesser worthiness.

(5) The group leader experiences an empathetic understanding of the group members' internal frames of reference. This involves "perceiving the internal frames of reference of others with accuracy, and with the emotional components and meanings which pertain there, as if one were the other person, but without ever losing the 'as if' condition" (Patterson, 1980, p. 481).

Group members have a need for positive regard from others and for positive self-regard. The therapeutic change depends upon the group leader's personality, attitudes and techniques and the group member's perception of this. Techniques used in this approach are ways of expressing and communicating respect, acceptance, concern and understanding and letting group members know that the leader is attempting to develop the internal frames of reference by thinking, feeling and exploring with the group members. These are the ways of establishing and maintaining a therapeutic relationship.

The counseling relationship enables group members to discover within themselves the capacity to use the relationship to change and grow. The counselor portrays characteristics of acceptance (non-judgemental, unconditional positive regard, respect for group members); congruence (unified, integrated, consistent); understanding, enabling the group members to explore freely and deeply and thus develop better comprehension of themselves, and communication of these characteristics. These can be expressed both verbally and non-verbally in natural and spontaneous ways. Relationships develop through this communication between the group leaders and group members that are experienced as safe, secure, free from threat and supporting. The group leader is perceived as dependable, trustworthy and consistent, and in this relationship, change can occur. The change or growth will bring group members closer to an understanding of their parents' divorce, to understand their loss in relation to the divorce process, and improved self-concept.

Theoretical Foundations for Techniques Employed

The theoretical foundation for the techniques employed in the CIT program is based on Piaget's theory on the development of understanding in the child. Group interaction will be structured for Piaget's concrete operational stage (7-11 years), during which understanding and insight are achieved through the interaction of the conceptual and the concrete (Piaget and Inhelder, 1969). Each session will focus on concrete stimuli using various techniques to make the themes more cognitively valuable to the children (i.e. films, worksheets, plasticine sculpting, charts, etc.).

Summary

The major conclusions reached on the basis of the reviews and experimental studies presented in this section are:

1. Research indicates students in elementary schools are, and will be, going through transitions in the form of family structure. This demands the development of intervention services for the students affected.
2. Themes that emerge for children 9-12 years of age are loyalty conflicts, strong feelings of anger and problems with anger expression, a sense of shame, a strong desire for parental reconciliation, self-blame, and loneliness.
3. Children's self-concepts are inversely related to marital discord.
4. Children's self-esteem is an important factor in healthy

post-divorce adjustment.

5. Group intervention programs are advocated for children of divorce.
6. Research indicates that few divorce groups for children provide programs that are theoretically orientated in terms of reference, foundation and counseling approach and little theoretical research is available to support their value. For example, few divorce groups for children address Wallerstein and Kelly's (1983) key psychological tasks, nor do they address specific themes that emerge for children 9-12 years of age.

Implications for This Research

The research and literature reviewed suggested that family transition creates a loss of the structure to which family members are accustomed. It was concluded that group intervention programs for children of divorce are needed to give children the opportunity to express and clarify their feelings about parental divorce. However, the research indicated that few intervention programs for children of divorce have been developed that encourage children to address Wallerstein and Kelly's (1983) key psychological tasks, nor do they include content to address specific themes identified in the literature that emerge for children 9-12 years of age. The research indicated that children's self concepts are inversely related to marital discord and that children's self-esteem is an important factor in healthy post-divorce adjustment. This suggested to the researcher that there may be a relationship between participation in a group intervention that

encourages children to address Wallerstein and Kelly's (1983) psychological tasks through theme related sessions and children's measures of self-esteem and divorce adjustment. Therefore, the null hypotheses of the study will focus on participation in a treatment program and self-esteem and divorce adjustment scores.

Hypotheses

The study will posits the following two null hypotheses:

1. There will be no significant difference in self-esteem scores of the treatment and control groups after participation in the group treatment program.
2. There will be no significant difference in divorce adjustment scores after participation in the group treatment program.

The dependent variables are operationally defined in Chapter I and will be obtained as follows:

1. Self-Esteem (Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory, Form B).
2. Divorce Adjustment (Children's Attitude Towards Divorce questionnaire).

The next chapter will present the development of the Children In Transition (CIT) program.

CHAPTER III

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILDREN IN TRANSITION (CIT) PROGRAM

The purpose of Chapter III is to present the development of the Children in Transition (CIT) program. This section includes the following subsections: Introduction, Objectives, An Overview of the CIT Program, Intake Interview, Task as Facilitator, Group Structure and Group Sessions.

Introduction

The Children In Transition (CIT) program involved eight one-hour group counseling sessions for upper-elementary students, ages 9 to 12, whose parents have separated or divorced. The eight group sessions were developed by the researcher and consisted of theme related activities designed to promote thought and discussion related to each child's experience with parental divorce. The content of the CIT program was formulated by the researcher based on various sources identified in the literature and research, for example, the general goals suggested for children's divorce groups and specific divorce reactions of children in the 9-12 year age group. Another source identified in the research was Wallerstein and Kelly's (1983) key psychological tasks, with specific reference to identifying and resolving the loss of the original family. The content was designed to be age-appropriate to the student and outlined a conceptual framework for understanding the process of divorce and grieving that is age-specific and developmentally appropriate to the student. Experiential as well as cognitive activities (ie. plasticine,

creative writing, films, role-playing, etc.) were proposed to present the session content to make the material as concrete as possible and to ensure that the material would not become boring and repetitious.

Objectives

To meet those issues of particular concern to older elementary school-aged children (9-12 years) involved in the divorce process, the primary objectives in designing the program were:

1) to provide a safe, non-threatening atmosphere for children to clarify, reorganize and understand feelings and emotions pertaining to the divore,

(2) to help children understand that others share similar feelings associated with parental divorce including feelings of anger, guilt, shame and rejection,

(3) to allow children the opportunity to explore the process of grieving in relation to the loss of their family of origin,

(4) to provide children with opportunities to enhance their self-esteem by participating in constructive interpersonal relationships with peers.

An Overview of the CIT Program

The intervention was shaped by identifying psychological reactions of older elementary school-aged children (9-12 years) to parental divorce (Stolberg and Anker, 1984; Wallerstein, 1983), for example, feelings of self-blame, anger, a sense of isolation and stigma, and unresolved loss issues. The eight-session program included three major areas:

Sessions 1-3 comprised the program's affective component. They sought to build support by providing children with opportunities to share common experiences, including divorce-related feelings and to get to know one another. Brainstorming, drawing, centering exercises, films, creative writing and role plays were used to facilitate the expression of feelings. They also focused on clarifying children's common misconceptions about divorce, and encouraged dealing with anger expression and control, one of Wallerstein's (1983) key psychological tasks. Children were encouraged to discuss actual anger experiences related to the divorce and to discuss appropriate and inappropriate ways of expressing anger and its consequences. Opportunities were provided for catharsis and mutual support around divorce-related anger experiences. Session 3 included a film depicting the reality of being told about parental divorce and the feelings it predisposes in children, including issues of blame. These early sessions were designed to catalyze expression of divorce-related feelings and the sharing of common experience and to reduce children's feelings of being different, of isolation, and of stigma.

Sessions 4-5 comprised the program's loss component. Children explored losses experienced through divorce and were given opportunities to express grief over loss of the family of origin, another of Wallerstein's (1983) key psychological tasks. Role-playing and brainstorming were used to explore losses and growth through losses were discussed. They explored the grief process and brainstormed coping strategies at each stage. This process elicited strong expressions of feelings. Children were encouraged to sculpt favorite family memories

with plasticine and to share favorite family photographs to facilitate the grieving process.

Sessions 6-8 dealt with the program's coping with change and looking ahead component. Session 6 included a filmstrip depicting the changes and period of adjustment following parental divorce. Children passed around the worry weight to discuss worrisome predicaments around issues of custody and current living arrangements. A key distinction was made between problems beyond children's control and thus not solvable (e.g., parent reconciliation) and those within their control (e.g., appropriate ways of communicating feelings). Role playing possible solutions was designed to increase children's sense of mastery and comfort with others and thus to address one of Wallerstein's (1983) crucial psychological tasks- disengaging from parental conflict and resuming the child's agenda. Session 7 was devoted to development of self-esteem and encouraged understanding that everyone is special and to recognize special qualities in self and other group members. The termination process was initiated by reminding the students that the next session was the last group meeting. Session 8 focused on how group members see themselves in the future and on the affirmation of the positive in the changed family and in each parent. Children wrote letters to each parent describing positives about each and about the changed family. The last session evaluated the group experience, including feelings about its ending.

Intake Interview

The CIT program promoted an intake interview with both the prospective group member, as well as with the custodial parent. The purpose of the intake interview was to help the group member assess his/her commitment to speak openly about divorce experiences. The purpose of the intake interview with the custodial parent was to explain the CIT program, to state and overview the objectives, and to answer questions about the program. The interview also provided information the counselor could use to understand each child's divorce situation, which then could facilitate the counselor's awareness of the dynamics operating during the group sessions.

Task as Facilitator

The group facilitator for the evaluative phase of the study was the researcher who had training in counseling techniques and experience working with children in groups. To effectively facilitate the CIT program counselors should have a broad knowledge base in: counseling techniques, including Carl Rogers' client-centered approach, child development, stages of loss theory (Kubler-Ross), the effects of divorce on older elementary school-aged children (9-12 years) and relaxation therapy. It is important that the counselor understand the nature of communication in a group of children (for example, therapeutic impact of peer validation, peer modeling, etc.). Counselors should possess a certain amount of warmth, respect and empathy, and be able to communicate this to the group members through the use of excellent

listening skills and modeling. Paramount to this process was the client-centered counseling approach upon which the CIT program was based.

Group Structure

Group selection and size was the foremost structural consideration. Group members were selected once they obtained parental permission and were able to make a committment following the intake interview. George and Dustin (1986) indicated that when deciding on group size for children, the group leader must consider the members' maturity level, attention span, and ability to work with others. With these factors in mind it was decided that optimal size for this study would be six students per group.

Another consideration in relation to the CIT program was scheduling of group sessions. Each of the eight group sessions was scheduled during class time for one hour. To identify a suitable physical setting that would assist in promoting the objectives of the CIT program was also a consideration. The room available was a small conference room, which was found to be too small to allow for movement and privacy when working individually on some of the activities, and therefore the group was moved to a larger room.

Children in Transition (CIT) Program: Group Sessions

Session 1: Getting Acquainted

Objectives:

1. To establish an atmosphere of support, warmth and fun in the group.
2. To get acquainted and encourage group belongingness.
3. To introduce divorce as a common influence in each of the childrens' lives.
4. To discuss issues of privacy, confidentiality and rules for discussion.

Eye-Opener

Discussion: Group Introductions

Sitting in a circle, the facilitator welcomes the group members and introduces self to the group. Group members introduce her or himself to the group. The facilitator should model the introduction attempting to establish openess and then move around the group giving each member an opportunity to do the same.

Activity: Getting Acquainted

Group members form pairs and spend a few minutes interviewing each other to determine likes, dislikes, hobbies, and family members. After the interview have each pair tell the group something about the other.

Stimulus Activities

Discussion: Purpose of the Group

The counselor explains the purpose of the group: "Many children experience divorce, in fact, each of you have parents that are separated or divorced. We are here to privately share all we can about divorce.

Some of the things we will talk about are what divorce means, how it makes us feel, what we can do about the range of feelings, how it affects us and other people in our lives, and problems that we may have because of the divorce."

Ask each member to say one positive thing they expect to achieve by being in this group.

Discussion: Group Rules

The counselor relates expectations and goals for the group in terms of issues of privacy, confidentiality, rules for discussion, and of the members behavior. The following rules are mentioned and discussed:

(a) Members are not required to say anything in the group unless they choose to and feel comfortable doing so. Members have the right to PASS if they are not ready to share.

(b) Information discussed in the group is private and is not to be shared with people outside the group. If the members wish to speak to their parent(s) about the group, they may do so. However, the children are to talk in general terms about what goes on in the group without passing on individual stories.

(c) Everyone is required to listen, and will be given an equal opportunity to speak.

Activity: Kinetic Family Drawing

The purpose is to gain further information about each member. This gives the member an opportunity to reflect about family members and to draw each in an activity.

Directions: Each member requires a blank piece of paper and a pencil. The group is asked to " draw a picture of your whole family doing

something, including you. Try to draw whole people- not stick figures. Remember, make everyone doing something- some kind of action."

Some children may be uncertain as to the limits of his or her family. For the purpose of this program, it is permissable to include the parent not living in the child's home, if the child so wishes.(The members may wish to leave the circle and find an area which is more private and comfortable). Often it is easier to express feelings in a drawing than verbally. Allow enough time so that each member is able to complete the drawing, as this projective experience often provides insight into how the child views his family. Upon completion, ask each child to label each person in the drawing according to their relationship to him, eg. self, mom, sister, dad, etc. In addition, actions of each figure should be identified and labeled, eg. running, sitting, etc. Invite the members to return to the group and share their pictures. The group counselor should model this sharing with his or her own picture. Members may verbally describe their pictures if they do not wish to share it with the group. The pictures will be collected and later viewed by the counselor for possible indicators.

(5) It is appropriate at this time to talk about the family in transition - as being changed or redefined, rather than being broken. The family structure is different now, changed, but not broken. Fathers and mothers remain fathers and mothers even if they do not live with each other. The counselor should explain to the children how this group will help them learn to handle this major change in the family structure. Relate to the children that being in the group means that they need not feel isolated and alone from friends and family. The

counselor should reassure the children that there are people who do understand how mixed up and difficult things are when parents divorce, and this group is a good place to share the feelings and concerns of children in transition.

Wrapping-Up Time: Good Thoughts

Ask the children to perform the following exercise until the next session: Each morning before you get up, lie on your back and let your body relax. Make a list of happy thoughts and let these thoughts pass through your mind. Say to yourself three times: "Today is going to be a good day for me. I feel good about myself." At the end of the day, think of the good things that happened that day. Say good-bye to group members and note next session day and time.

Session 2: Feelings and Defences

Objectives:

1. To learn a centering exercise to get in touch with inside feelings and emotions.
2. To become aware of the importance of feelings and the messages that they are sending.
3. To learn what defences are and to practice ways of lowering defences.

Eye-Opener

Discussion: Sharing Experiences

Review group rules. Stress the importance of listening to the person who is talking.

Ask each member to relate a happy or fun experience they had since the last session. Some members may wish to share a negative or "bad" experience, indicate that this is acceptable. Discuss the feelings they experienced doing the "good thoughts" exercise in the mornings.

Activity: Centering Exercise

Encourage each member to find an area in the room where they can sit comfortably, or stretch out on the floor. "Close your eyes...take a deep breathe in and slowly let it out...another big breathe in...and slowly let it out...try to imagine what it would be like to have no feelings...think of floating on a cloud and of seeing nothing but the color white...think to yourself...of how your body feels all white...now think of jumping in a cold swimming pool on a hot summer day...what does your body feel like?...think of the taste of chocolate ice-cream...think of a hug from someone you love....a ride on a roller coaster...slowly come back to the room...be aware of your breathing...of the sounds of

the room...and when you are ready...open your eyes and be here...in the room... together. What feeling did you like best? Where in your body did you feel the cold water? Where did you feel the hug? What feeling did you like best...least?"

Stimulus Activities

Discussion: Feelings

An important part of getting to know ourselves is to understand our feelings. There are two kinds of feelings. One has to do with physical sensations, like burning our finger, and pulling our finger away from the source of pain. This is a message that our body gives to us on the outside. What about a feeling like happiness or sadness? Sometimes we call them inside feelings, emotions, and these feelings can also protect us. Everyone might have the same feelings but might express them differently. To meet our needs we must first recognize what we are feeling, then we can learn to share our feelings and ask for help if we need to. If I let you know that I am pleased and happy that you share in the group, then you know how I feel, and you know that it is important to me that you share your feelings.

Activity: Sculpting Feelings

All group members (including facilitator) are asked to stand and remember a time when they were happy. "Show that feeling with your whole body: face, hands, arms, legs." Everyone is to look sideways at each other to see how they look when they are happy. Repeat this game, using feelings suggested by the group members. Have students return to the circle.

Activity: Feeling Star Activity Sheet

Brainstorm the different kinds of feelings and record in the feeling star. Pass out the activity sheet and have the students put their name in the middle of the star. Invite them to circle the feelings that they have experienced specific to the time of their parents' separation and divorce and the present. Invite the children to share and express the feelings they circled. "What feelings are easy to share? Hard to share? Do the things that happen to you affect your feelings and how you act?" Discuss how their parents' separation or divorce has affected their feelings, how they felt initially towards the divorce, how those feelings are changing, how they are changing, how do they feel most of the time now?

Activity: Kinetic Family Drawings

Indicate that last day we talked about the drawings, but that we didn't talk about the feelings in the drawings. Ask the children to share the feelings that each person in the drawing is experiencing.

Discussion: Defences

"Feelings are private so that we don't know what another person is feeling unless they share that feeling with us. Sometimes we cover up our feelings." Ask someone to come up and stand behind the Feeling Star, and to look sad, happy, etc. Ask the rest of the group to guess what that person is feeling. Let the volunteer answer. Point out that standing behind the Feeling Star is like wearing a mask or a defence and that it keeps others from knowing what we are feeling. Ask if they have ever felt disappointed, hurt or sad and not shown it. How did it feel to hide feelings?

Activity: Defence Masks

Discuss different ways that we behave to hide our feelings. Have each member select a Defence Mask and share when they have used that behavior to hide their real feelings. Ask if they sometimes hide their feelings about their parents' separation and divorce. Invite each member to share the last time they used a mask or defence.

Wrapping-Up Time: Sharing Feelings

Have the members discuss their thoughts and feelings about the group. Discuss what activities they enjoyed and how they feel about being in the group. For homework, have the children tell themselves and another person how they feel at least once a day. Tell the children that you look forward to seeing them next week and end the session on a positive note, for example, you all shared well today or you are all good listeners, etc.

Session 3: Being Told

Objectives:

1. To provide an opportunity for the children to express how they were told of their parents' divorce.

2. To help the children identify and express how they felt about their parents' divorce.

3. To allow expression of angry feelings the children may have towards their parents in relation to the divorce.

Eye-Opener

Activity: Reviewing Feelings

Review feelings from last session. Post the "Feeling Star" to visually make available the range of feelings. Discuss something important that happened in each family since the last session.

Stimulus Activities

Film: THE UMPIRE (17 minutes: National Film Board of Canada)

Show the film "The Umpire". This film is about a nine-year old boy named Phillip who has to deal with the fact that his father is suddenly not there to be an umpire at his regular Saturday morning baseball game. His younger brother is more interested about getting into Phillip's game than he is in missing his father. Phillip also has to face his teammates without his father-umpire. In the end, although the game is a success, Phillip and his brother learn from their mother that their father will no longer be living with them. This film is short and intense. It promotes the idea that separation and divorce isn't fun, but that "the game goes on", plus the idea of resilience in that "you can get on with

your life". It depicts some of the feelings children experience when they are told of their parents' decision to separate.

Discussion: Feelings About Being Told

After the film, discuss the following questions: What feelings did Phillip experience in the film? What feeling did he experience most? What do you think Phillip's mom was feeling? What do you think his brother was feeling? What feelings did you experience during the film? Did you share some of the feelings of Phillip in the film when you were told that your parents were getting a divorce?

Activity: Centering Exercise

"Sitting comfortably...I want you to close your eyes...take a deep breath in and slowly let it out...another breath in...and slowly let it out...I want you to imagine that you are travelling back to the time when you were told of your Mom and Dad's separation...what was it like?..(pause for reflection)...can you remember who was there?...who told you?...can you remember what they said?...how did you feel at the time?...what did you do?...did you cry?...how do you think your parents felt?...slowly come back to the room...be aware of your breathing...and when you are ready...open your eyes and be here...in the room...together."

Invite the children to share how they were told of their parent's separation. Have them identify and share the feelings that they experienced at that time.

Activity: Karen and Tommy's Story

Read to the group Karen and Tommy's story. Ask the children how they think Karen is feeling? Tommy is feeling? Who is Tommy angry at? Who is

Karen angry at? What can Karen do to cope with her angry feelings? What can Tommy do? What are some appropriate ways for Karen or Tommy to handle their anger?

Activity: Anger Release

Have the students close their eyes and think of the anger they may have towards their parents for getting separated or divorced. Ask them to see their anger, to hear it, to feel it. Have the children imagine that their anger is a newspaper. Invite them to scrunch up a newspaper and put their anger (the paper) into a big garbage bag. Tie the garbage bag up and have the children say goodbye to their anger.

Discussion: Anger Messages

Many of the children will express feelings of sadness or anger. Discuss with the group ways in which they cope with their feelings of anger. Brainstorm possible ways of expressing anger and list on the back of the "Feelings Star". Discuss the messages in their anger (e.g., I'm afraid, I'm hurt). Brainstorm possible ways of expressing anger. Discuss good ways to handle anger (count to ten, take three deep breaths, running, pounding a pillow, riding a bike) and poor ways to handle anger (hitting, breaking things, throwing a temper tantrum, blaming, holding it inside). Stress that is okay to feel angry as long as you don't hurt yourself, others or property. Brainstorm the consequences of each idea. "What would happen if I did this?" Write these ideas on the "Feelings Star". To help the children explore appropriate ways of expressing anger, instruct the children to ask three questions for each idea. "Will I hurt myself? Will I hurt someone else? Will I get in trouble?" Explain that if they can answer no to all three

then it is an appropriate way to express anger. Discuss that to cope with anger it is helpful to (1) recognize our own feelings of anger (2) use the energy of anger in a good way, and (3) share it by telling someone how we feel.

Activity: "Dear Mom... Dear Dad..."

Indicate to the children that the memory of being told of their parents' separation will probably last for a long time. It was a difficult time, and that it is normal to feel all kinds of powerful feelings and emotions. Indicate that it is okay to feel these emotions. Ask them to try to remember that their parents were in pain too, and to try to forgive them. Invite the children to write a letter to one or both of their parents about how they felt when they were told about the separation or divorce. Indicate that it is okay to write about all their feelings, including anger. Have them write about any unanswered questions that they may wish to ask about the divorce. Indicate that the letters will be put in a pretend mailbox and not actually given to the parents, unless they so wish.

Wrapping-Up Time: Sharing Anger

The time that is left can be used for a general discussion on how group members feel about being in the group. Time permitting, have each group member choose an appropriate method to deal with anger and ask them to try using this method the next time they feel angry.

Handout: Session Three

Karen's Story

Karen was nine years old when she learned about her parents decision to separate. Karen was in the living room reading a book when she heard her father and mother screaming at each other. She heard her father screaming names at her mother and then slamming the front door and leaving. Karen ran after her dad, but he was already in the car and was pulling out of the driveway. She wanted to tell him to come back, but she knew that he wouldn't listen to her, he was too angry. Karen felt very scared, and she started to cry. Her mother told her that it would be okay, but things haven't been okay, they've been miserable. Karen misses her dad and only sees him when he has time. She feels very sad and angry that he would run out on her like he did.

Tommy's Story

Tommy was twelve years old when he found out about his parents' decision to divorce. His father told him one day after hockey practice that he would be moving out soon. He remembers thinking that he will never be able to play hockey again, what will his friends think? Are they going to think that I am different? Are they going to still like me? Tommy begged his dad to stay and he started to cry. Tommy wondered if he had done something wrong. He thought that if he practiced real hard and was as good as Gretzky maybe his parents would stay together. Tommy's feelings of guilt and shame stayed inside, and soon he felt like he could explode. He was so angry at his parents for doing this to him.

Session 4: Divorce and the Grief Process

Objectives:

1. To explore losses experienced through divorce.

2. To normalize the grieving process through a discussion of the stages of grieving.

3. To provide an opportunity for group members to express their grief of the loss of the family of origin.

Eye-Opener

Activity: Role-playing

Have group members role-play Karen's story and take turns playing different parts. Discuss the losses that Karen may have felt. Also have group members role-play Tommy's story and discuss Tommy's losses.

Stimulus Activities

Activity: Loss Tree Worksheet

Brainstorm a list of losses associated with divorce. Distribute copies of the "Loss Tree" and discuss the possible losses associated with divorce. Ask group members to circle the losses that they have experienced. Invite group members to share the losses they have experienced through parental separation or divorce. Discuss how it felt to live in the family before the divorce and how it feels to live in the changed family. Explain that there is growth through loss (thus the tree) and have group members brainstorm ways in which they have grown.

Discussion: Losses and Grief

"When you were told of your parent's decision to divorce you may have experienced feelings of shock or disbelief. Do you remember feeling, 'How could this happen to me?'. By having these feelings the process of

grieving over your loss through divorce was beginning. The word process usually means stages to which there is some sort of end."

Invite group members to share the losses and grief that they may have experienced in the death of a relative, friend or pet. Disuss how they thought or felt at various times after the event. Ask if divorce is similar to death or other losses they may have experienced, e.g. a pet that ran away, or a friend moving, etc. Explain that people who go through loss, whether through death, or divorce, or whatever, tend to go through stages in their thinking and feeling and that it is normal and okay to experience a wide range of feelings.

Activity: Children of Divorce Grief Process

Distribute copies of the "Children of Divorce Grief Process" worksheet. (See following page.) Discuss the stages of grieving involved in parental divorce. Discuss where group members think they are in the grieving process. Discuss coping strategies group members have developed and experienced at each stage.

Activity: Family Memories

Have group members use plasticine to mold one of their favorite memories with their family of origin. Allow time for members to reflect and to work quietly. Have group members discuss their favorite memory and invite them to share their feelings of loss about other favorite family memories.

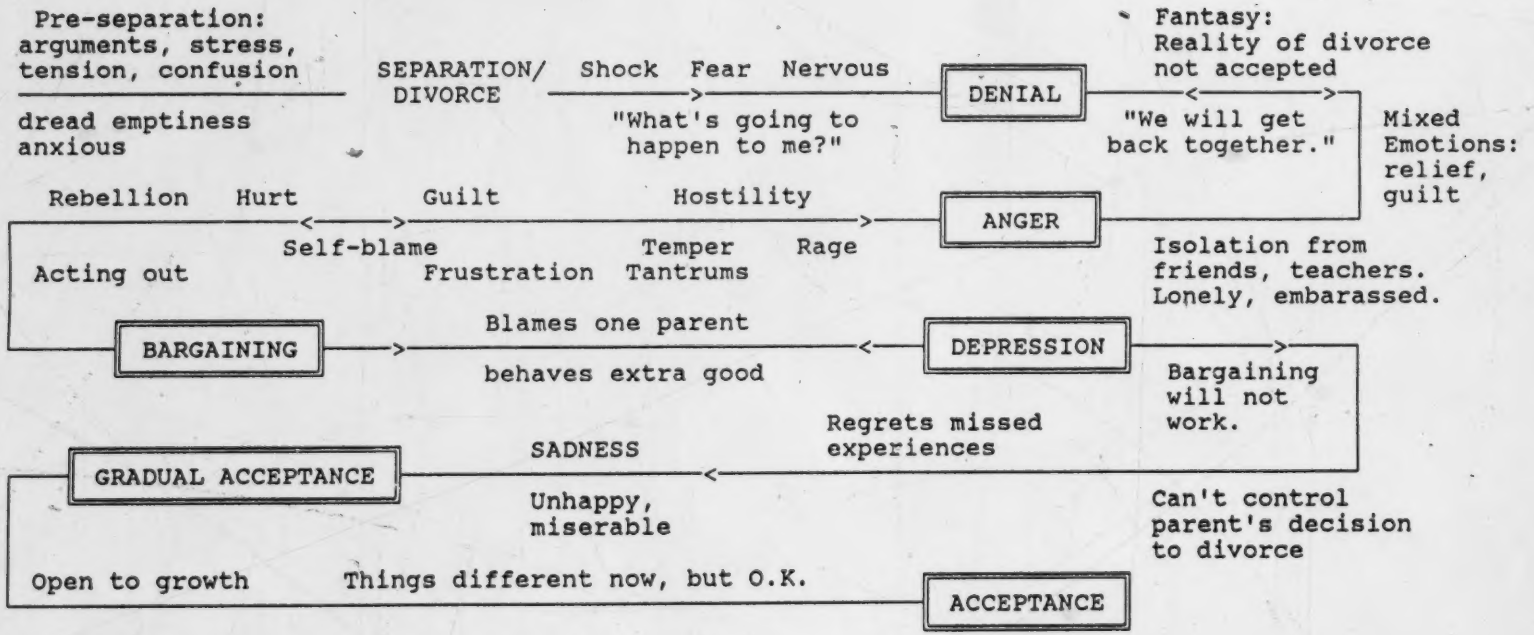
Wrapping-Up Time: Homework

Have the students discuss how they feel about being in the group. For homework, ask group members to bring favorite family photographs of

their family of origin and of their changed family for next session.

Thank the group for sharing their thoughts, feelings and experiences.

CHILDREN OF DIVORCE GRIEF PROCESS MODEL
(9 to 12 years age group)
WHELAN (1989)



Note: Not everyone goes through every
stage or in the same order.

Session 5: Family Specialness

Objectives:

1. To provide an opportunity for group members to share favorite family occasions and photographs of the family of origin and to say good-bye to this family unit.
2. To help group members become aware of the variety of family units and to focus on the positive qualities of their families.
3. To assure the children that divorce is an adult decision and that children are not to blame.

Eye Opener

Activity: Family Photographs

Review the stages of grieving and ask group members to share where they think they are most of the time now. Reaffirm to the group that a wide range of feelings are to be expected and that acceptance does eventually come. Invite group members to share their favorite family occasions and photographs of the family before the separation or divorce. Allow the children to express their feelings regarding how they feel now that their family is different. Invite group members to symbolically say good-bye to their family of origin.

Stimulus Activities

Discussion: Family Uniqueness

Brainstorm the different kinds of families (one-parent, two-parents, stepmother-father, stepfather-mother, mom-grandparents, etc.). Indicate that each family is different and that one family is not better than another; that there isn't any right number of members to be in a family, and that all families are special. Relate that it is important to

remember that children are not to blame or responsible for their parents' decision to separate or divorce. Invite the members to share their feelings on why they might feel they are to blame. Reassure group members that divorce is an adult decision. Have group members generate positive statements about their family and write them down on the back of their Kinetic Family drawings. Invite the children to share their statements with the group.

Activity: Family Specialness Worksheet

Have group members fill out the worksheet and invite them to share their answers.

Activity: Family Fun

Time permitting, have group members paint his/her changed family showing a happy or special time. Provide the opportunity for group members to share anything they want to about their family.

Wrapping-Up Time: Planning Family Fun

In the sharing circle, have group members relax and close their eyes. Have them think of a time that their changed family was having a good time. What were they doing? Why were they happy? For homework, ask the group members to plan something fun that their families can share together over the next week. Have group members share their choice with the group.

Activity: Session Five

Family Specialness

1. The members of my family are...

2. The best things about my family are that...

3. Things my family do together are...

4. Things my family do to make me feel special are...

5. Three positive things about each family member are...

Session 6: Changing Roles and Coping Skills

Objectives:

1. To explore and gain an understanding of each child's perspective on the changed family.
2. To encourage discussion related to change in roles, responsibilities and needs within the family.
3. To provide an opportunity to discuss the benefits and difficulties of custodial arrangements and steparents.
4. To provide opportunities for group members to discuss various ways of coping with change.

Eye-Opener

Filmstrip: AFTER THE DIVORCE (7 minutes)

This filmstrip describes the various feelings connected with the changes and period of adjustment following parental separation or divorce. After the filmstrip, discuss the kinds of changes and feelings the children in the filmstrip had experienced. Invite group members to share how they have changed and the changes in their life since the separation or divorce (e.g., vacations, new school, Christmas, new home, etc.). Encourage group members to express their way of coping with the changes. Explore and acknowledge the existence of various strengths to confront change (e.g., what has helped, what have they done to cope, etc.).

Stimulus Activities

Activity: Roles/Responsibilities

Brainstorm ways in which roles/responsibilites change when there is a change in family structure. Make a list of the responsibilities family

members had before and after the divorce. Discuss roles/responsibilities that group members would like to be in more often or less often.

Discussion: Blended Families

Discuss how step-parents are portrayed in fairy tales (e.g., Cinderella, Hansel and Gretel, etc.). Invite group members to discuss their feelings related to boy/girl friends; steparents; step-brothers or step-sisters; custodial arrangements, etc. Discuss current living arrangements and how they are working out.

Activity: The Worry Weight

Pass around the worry weight and have group members share something about the divorce that worries them. Ask if any one else had that worry. Encourage sharing of feelings. Discuss the things that they can change and the things they can not. Brainstorm a list of possible divorce-related problems and possible solutions. (Refer to the list to generate discussion). Have group members role-play some of the situations and possible solutions. Have group members reherse or role-play questions that they would like to discuss with their Mom or Dad that they have not been able to.

Wrapping-Up Time: Sharing Worries

Invite group members to share a fun or interesting activity that they are planning with their families. For homework, ask group members to share their feelings with their Mom or Dad about something that worries them about the divorce.

Activity: Session Six

Possible Divorce-Related Problems

1. Dad promises to take Jason to the show on Saturday, but phones on Saturday morning to say that he can't make it. Jason feels disappointed and very angry because his Dad forgot to take him to the baseball game last week. Jason refuses to talk to his Dad on the phone and says that he never wants to see him again. What solution could there be to this misunderstanding?

2. Joanne feels that her step-mother pays more attention to her step-sister than she does to Joanne. Joanne tells her father how she feels but can't tell her step-mother. Joanne feels lonely and sad and starts to cry whenever her step-mother asks her to do some chores around the house. What are different ways for Joanne to handle her feelings of hurt?

3. Scott feels embarrassed that his parents are divorced. He just moved to a new school and he is afraid that the other kids will find out that his parents are divorced. He plays by himself at school but he feels very lonely. What are other ways that Scott could handle this situation?

4. Susan spends some days at her Mom's house and some days at her Dad's house. Sometimes she doesn't know when she is going to be staying at each parent's house and often forgets her homework. Susan is getting behind in her school work and she is worried that her next report card will not be very good. What could Susan do to solve her problem in this situation?

Session 7: Specialness

Objectives:

This session is devoted to self-esteem to help group members-

1. Understand that everyone is unique and special.
2. Recognize special qualities in him/her self and others.

Eye-Opener

Activity: I Am Special Worksheet

Discuss with the group members some of the "worries" that they may have discussed with their Mom or Dad. Indicate that each of the group members is special by touching them on the shoulder and saying "Here is a special person" to each child. Discuss what special means and how we become special (e.g., different, unique, life experiences, parents, friends, what others say about us, how we feel, etc.). Discuss the concept of self-esteem (the view a person has of him or her self; what a person believes about themself). Pass out the "I am special because..." worksheet in which the counselor has written something special about each member. Pass the sheet around until each person has written a compliment or something special about that person on the sheet. When the sheets have been returned to their owners indicate to the group members that part of the way to develop healthy self-esteem is to receive compliments from each other and that compliments help us feel good about ourselves. Have members share some of the compliments on their sheets. Discuss when they feel special or loved in their family. Who makes them feel loved? How do they do this?

Stimulus Activities

Activity: Tracing Self Outlines

Take turns tracing a full-length outline of one another on paper. Have group members write down some things they do not like about themselves on one side (ie. I don't have many friends, etc.). The purpose is to give the members a chance to ventilate or express their negative feelings and thoughts about themselves to make room for considering some positive statements. Invite group members to share one thing from their list. Have them write statements that say "I am _____ in a positive way (helpful, friendly, nice, etc.). Have group members tell one positive thing about another group member and invite them to give themselves a compliment out loud. Have group members fill in the rest of the outline with favorite foods, likes, dislikes, favorite shows, books, etc. and then paint or color their outlines. Discuss some similarities and differences in light of being special. Have group members to paint their self outlines or profiles.

Wrapping-Up Time: Group Termination

So that the termination process might begin, remind group members that the next session will be the last group meeting. Ask group members if there are issues that they would like to further discuss in the last session. Indicate to the group members that the counselor will be available to discuss any issues, problems or worries individually if group members so wish. Close the group with comments relating to the hard work that went into the success of the sessions.

Session 8: Looking Ahead

Objectives:

1. To address any concerns or questions that may have come up from previous sessions.
2. To focus on how group members see themselves in the future.
3. To affirm the positive in the changed family and in each parent.
4. To evaluate the progam and to say good-bye to the group.

Eye-Opener

Activity: Lifeline Worksheet

Have the students draw a life-line which includes all the important events in their life starting from their birth. Stress that the important events are to consist of both positive and negative ones. Include self in activity and model the explanation of own life-line. Have them draw a sun at the end of their life-line and section it off into two. Ask them to draw a picture of what they think they will be doing 5 and 10 years from now. Brainstorm for ideas. Discuss similarities and differences in their lives and that it is possible to overcome negative events and to look forward to the future. Discuss coping strategies and positive ways of handling difficult life events. Invite each member to share their wishes and hopes for the future. (This is a good time to share cookies and juice).

Stimulus Activities

Activity: Family Letters

Invite group members to write a letter to each parent. In the letter have group members include three things they like about their Mother and their Father; their real feelings about the divorce and three best wishes. Have the group members stress the positives of each parent and ask them to let parents know how they are doing; how they enjoyed the sessions, how they were helpful, etc. Indicate to the children that their letters will be presented to their parents on the celebration evening. (Dr. R.M. Hague, University of Alberta, 1987 offered the suggestions for this activity during a discussion).

Wrapping-Up Time: Program Evaluation

Have group members complete a Kinetic Family Drawing using the same directions as in session one. Have group members complete a program evaluation form. Close the group by complimenting group members on sharing their thoughts and feelings. Invite the members to see you individually if they have any areas they wish to discuss privately.

CHAPTER IV

METHOD AND DESIGN

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology for examining the CIT program and to report on how the research was conducted. The chapter is divided into two major sections. Part I (evaluative phase) is the exploratory process aimed at determining what program elements of the CIT program require revision. This phase includes a revision of the CIT program based on the feedback from outside evaluators, students and parents. Part II (experimental phase) investigates the efficacy of the revised CIT program and is divided into the following subsections: subjects and conditions, instruments and measures, null hypotheses, analysis of data and procedure in collecting data.

Part I: Evaluative Phase

The evaluative phase of the study was an exploratory process aimed at determining what CIT program elements required revision. An attempt was made to examine the program in terms of the following three guidelines:

1. objectives- how the lessons do or do not contribute to increased understanding of self in relationship to parental divorce. 2. lesson content- the material that will be included in the program. 3. approach used in presenting the material ie. films, role playing, discussion, creative writing, etc.

Scriven (1972b) indicated that outside evaluators were necessary in order to get a more objective assessment. Therefore, outside evaluators were utilized and requested to frame their observations of video-taped sessions and comments on each of the sessions in terms of the three previously mentioned dimensions. In addition, they were requested to rate the sessions on a five-point scale (Appendix B). The outside evaluators included the Director of Student Counseling Services for the Edmonton Public School Board, Edmonton, Alberta; a counseling psychologist and lecturer in the counseling program with the Department of Educational Psychology, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta; and a counselor in an Edmonton Public School, Edmonton, Alberta.

The students were also included in the evaluation procedure and were given the opportunity to provide their comments on each session (Appendix B). Program evaluation also included student and parent evaluations in the form of open-ended questionnaires (Appendix B).

To obtain an objective analysis of appropriate methods and techniques consistent with the client-centered approach, the researcher has drawn from the literature statements which were descriptive of possible aspects of that relationship (Appendix B). For the evaluative phase of the study, the evaluators were requested to use the checklist to determine if the researcher's counseling approach was consistent with the client-centered theoretical approach to counseling.

Subjects

A school in the Edmonton Public School District was selected because the principal of this particular school supported the research project

and gave permission for the participation of his school in the study. Letters describing the program were sent to all parents of fourth-grade through sixth-grade pupils (Appendix C). The letters were followed by phone contacts to parents who gave permission for their child to participate in the program and by intake interviews to describe in detail the program and to gather background information. A background information form was filled out by the parents at this time (Appendix D). That process identified six white, middle-class children with written parental consent. None was currently in any kind of treatment. One student indicated that she was concerned about her marks and did not want to miss school, and therefore did not participate in the program. The sample (n=5) included three boys and two girls: two fifth graders, and three fourth graders with the average age of the students being 9.4 years. The group met for eight bi-weekly one hour sessions.

Part II: Experimental Phase

The experimental phase of the study investigated the efficacy of the revised CIT program which was based on the feedback from the outside evaluators, parents and students.

Subjects and Conditions

Two schools in the Edmonton Public School District were selected because the principals of these particular schools supported the research project and gave permission for the participation of their schools in the study. Referrals were made by classroom teachers, the counselors and the principals, with letters sent to the parents of

prospective group members. The letters were followed by phone contacts to parents who gave permission for their child to participate in the program and by intake interviews to describe in detail the program and to gather background information. A background information form was filled out by the parents at this time (Appendix D). That process identified ten white, middle-class children with written parental consent. None were currently in any kind of treatment. The sample included seven boys and three girls: one sixth grader, six fifth graders, and three fourth graders with the average age of the students being 10.2 years. The students at one school were assigned to an experimental group (experimental, E; n=5) and students at the other school were assigned to a control group (control, C; n=5). All data analyses were based on 5 Es and 5 Cs and the drop-out rate was zero.

Instruments and Measures

1. Culture-Free Self Esteem Inventory, Form B (Battle, 1981).

Although there are a number of affective scales designed to measure self-regard, the Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI) for children, Form B (Battle, 1981) was chosen for its psychometric qualities, noting it was particularly suitable for children in the Edmonton area. Form B was standardized on 212 elementary students and test-retest correlations for Form B with elementary school students enrolled in the Edmonton Public School system in grades 3-6 range from .79-.92 (Battle, 1981). Further, Lian-Hwang (1988) reviewed five self-report measures and three rating scales on self-esteem and recommended the SEI for its usefulness in program evaluation when self-esteem was a major concern.

The SEI contains thirty items, indicating either high or low self-esteem. Of these items ten make up the general subscale, five the social subscale, five the academic subscale, five the parental subscale and five comprise the lie-scale. The instrument without the lie scale contains twenty-five items intended to measure an individual's perception in four areas: general self, social (indicating perceived peer relationships), school (indicating perceived academic competence), and parents (indicating perceived relationships with parents). The items are divided in two groups: those which indicate high self-esteem (e.g. "Boys and girls like to play with me"), and those which indicate low self-esteem (e.g. "I only have a few friends"). The individual checks each item either "yes" or "no" and the self-esteem score is the total number of items checked which indicate high or low self-esteem. Scores range from 1-25 and high scores indicate greater self-esteem. According to Battle (1981), the instrument has content and concurrent validity (Appendix A).

2. The Children's Attitude Toward Divorce (CATD) Questionnaire.

For the present study, no standardized measure was available to assess children's adjustment to divorce. The CATD was developed by the researcher for this study to assess children's divorce-related attitudes, using 4-point severity scales (0 = strongly agree, 1= agree, 2= disagree and 3= strongly disagree). The statements were drawn from current research literature and reflect those issues and concerns specific to children in the 9-12 year age group (ie. issues of self blame, strong feelings of anger, a strong desire for parental

reconciliation, loneliness, etc.). The CATD includes 10 specific divorce-related items (e.g., "It is my fault that my parents are divorced"; and "If I am extra good my parents will get back together again"). Scores range from 0-30 and high CATD scores indicate better adjustment. Two open-ended unscored questions are included at the end of this scale (e.g., "Divorce is..." ,and "My experience with divorce is..."). Validity and reliability estimates are not available for this scale (Appendix A).

Null Hypotheses

The two null hypotheses of the study were as follows:

H1: There will be no significant difference in self-esteem scores of the treatment and control groups after participation in the group treatment program.

H2: There will be no significant difference in divorce adjustment scores of the treatment and control groups after participation in the group treatment program.

Analysis of Data

To test the hypotheses, the data were analyzed using a two-way analysis of variance with repeated measures. This will be used to test for Group and Time Factor effects within and between the CIT experimental group, and the control group on each of the two dependent

variables: self-esteem and divorce adjustment. Rather than using the individual scores the analysis was based on the group mean. A nonequivalent control-group design was used because random assignment was not possible. The distinguishing features of this design are: administration of a pretest and postest to both the experimental group and control group, and non-random assignment of subjects to the groups. For purposes of internal validity this design is regarded as effective in controlling for main effects of history, maturation, testing, and instrumentation. However, this design does not control for purposes of external validity and there is limited generalizability to other populations.

Procedure in Collecting Data

Custodial parents were notified of the group in the form of a newsletter that outlined the CIT program and included a consent form to allow their children to participate in the study (Appendix C). Letters and consent forms were distributed and collected by the teachers. An initial interview with the custodial parent and participant took place before the treatment program commenced. At this time the parents had an opportunity to discuss the revised CIT program objectives and to overview the program content and session material. It was also an opportunity to reassure the parents of the confidentiality of the modified CIT program. Parents were encouraged to discuss their children's progress with the group facilitator at anytime and students were free to terminate their participation in the program at any time.

The room available for the experimental group was a conference room that was suitable for group activities.

The researcher administered the self-esteem inventory and the divorce adjustment questionnaire in March 1988 to both the experimental group and the control group. The experimental group was involved in the modified CIT program and met for eight bi-weekly one hour sessions. However, the control group did not meet. The researcher was the facilitator for the experimental group and had been trained through the graduate level counseling practicum offered in the Department of Educational Psychology, University of Alberta, in Edmonton, Alberta. The post measure was administered by the researcher in April 1988 to both the treatment group and the control group. The immediate intervention group (experimental, E; n-5) was at one school and delayed intervention (control, C; n=5) group was at the other school. Upon completion of the program the reseacher readministered the self-esteem inventory and the divorce adjustment questionnaire to both the experimental group and the control group. After posttesting with Es and Cs was completed, the children who had been Cs then also met for eight bi-weekly one hour sessions, which allowed all participants an opportunity to use the program and avoided the issue of denying the program to some persons in the study. Results of the evaluative phase of the study and the experimental phase of the study are presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

The purpose of Chapter V is to present and summarize the results of the study. The chapter is divided into two major parts. Part I provides the results of the evaluative phase of the study based on the external evaluators' evaluations with reference to objectives, content and approach. Results from the student and parent evaluations are also presented. Part II of the chapter provides the results of the experimental phase and the statistical results of the data collected with reference to the two hypotheses under study.

PART I: Evaluative Phase

Initial Expectations

The expectations will be discussed in terms of session content, approach and objectives. With reference to session content, the intent was to design the CIT material so that it could be age-appropriate to the student and easily understood. The material that was covered outlined a conceptual framework for understanding the process of divorce and grieving that is age-specific and developmentally appropriate to the student. In addition, it was the intent to provide the children with an opportunity to gain knowledge and also work through issues in a non-threatening atmosphere.

Various approaches were proposed to present the session content. That was done to make the material as concrete as possible, and also to

ensure the material would not become boring and repetitious. The intent was to utilize experiential as well as cognitive dimensions (e.g., plasticine, creative writing, films, role-playing, etc.).

The intent in designing the overall objectives of the CIT program was to meet those issues of particular concern to older elementary school-aged children (9-12 years) involved in the divorce process and included the following primary objectives:

(1) to provide a safe, non-threatening atmosphere for children to clarify, reorganize and understand feelings and emotions pertaining to the divorce,

(2) to help children understand that others share similar feelings associated with parental divorce including feelings of anger, guilt, shame and rejection,

(3) to allow children the opportunity to explore the process of grieving in relation to the loss of their family of origin,

(4) to provide children with opportunities to enhance their self-esteem by participating in constructive interpersonal relationships with peers.

The session objectives were designed thematically with the intent of contributing to the overall objectives of the CIT program and included the following themes: Session 1- Getting Acquainted; Session 2- Feelings and Defences; Session 3- Being Told; Session 4- Divorce and the Grief Process; Session 5- Family Specialness; Session 6- Changing Roles and Coping Skills; Session 7- Specialness; Session 8- Looking Ahead.

External Evaluators' Observations

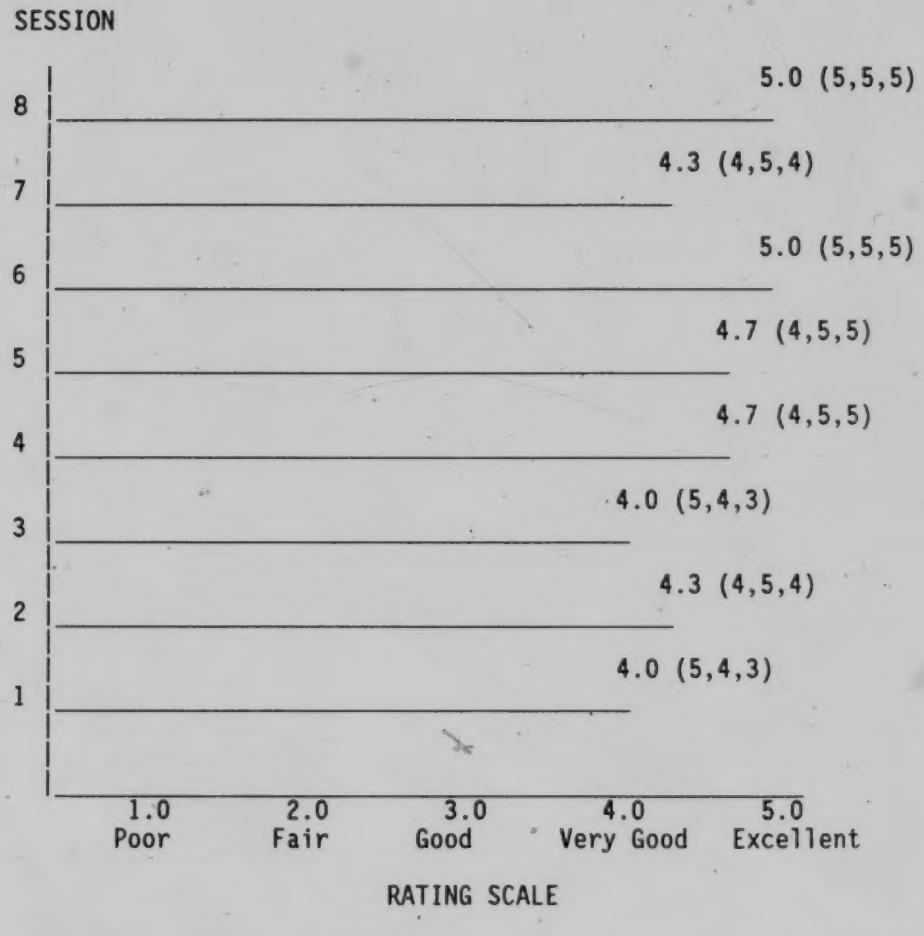
The evaluators' observations were framed in terms of session content, approach and objectives. Upon viewing the videotaped sessions, they rated each session using a 5-point rating scale in addition to adding their comments. To obtain an objective analysis of appropriate methods and techniques consistent with the client-centered approach, the researcher drew from the literature statements descriptive of facilitative conditions of that relationship (Appendix B). Each evaluator used a 5-point rating scale to determine if the researcher's counseling approach was consistent with these attitudes and behaviors during the sessions. The summary results of their ratings are listed in Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Figure 1 indicated that the evaluators' general ratings usually ranged between 4.0 and 5.0 on the five-point scale. Sessions six and eight received a high rating (5.0) indicating that they were well received, while sessions one and three received a lower evaluation (4.0), which indicates that it was not considered to be as effective as the others.

This same type of pattern appeared to develop when the lessons were broken down in terms of approach and objectives (Figures 2 and 3). Sessions six and eight were consistently rated higher than the others, while session three was generally rated lower. This pattern persisted, for example, session six received an overall higher rating (4.9) and session three a less favorable rating (4.0) (Figure 4). In terms of an absolute rating, session objectives and content receive a slightly higher rating (4.5) than session approach (4.4) (Figure 5).

FIGURE 1

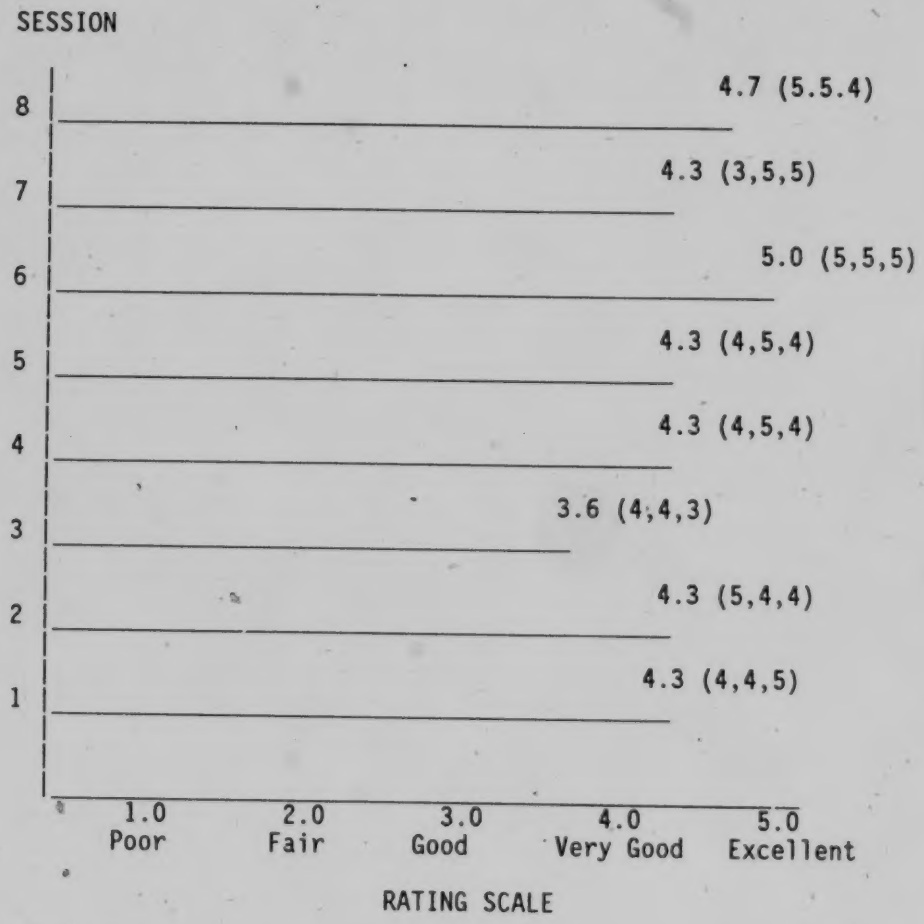
A MEAN COMPARISON OF EVALUATORS' CONTENT RATINGS



NOTE: The figure outlines the average scores, the scores for each evaluator are in the brackets.

FIGURE 2

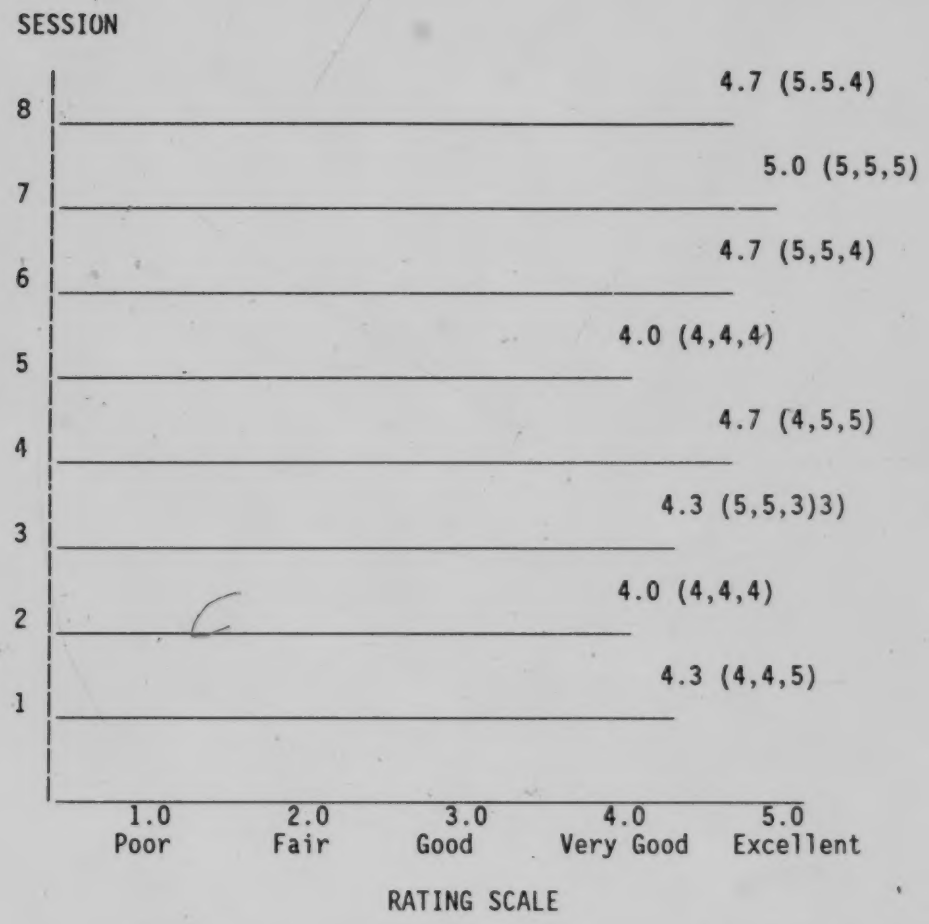
A MEAN COMPARISON OF EVALUATORS' APPROACH RATINGS



NOTE: The figure outlines the average scores, the scores for each evaluator are in the brackets.

FIGURE 3

A MEAN COMPARISON OF EVALUATORS' OBJECTIVES RATINGS

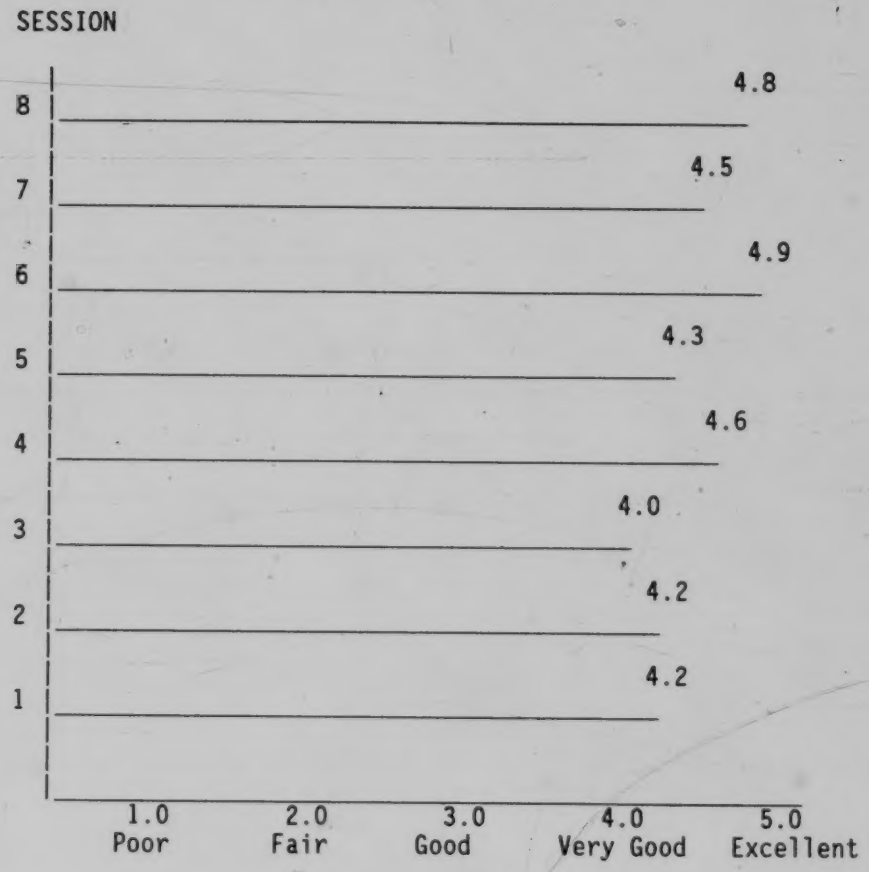


NOTE: The figure outlines the average scores, the scores for each evaluator are in the brackets.

FIGURE 4

A MEAN COMPARISON OF EVALUATORS' OVERALL RATING OF EACH CIT SESSION

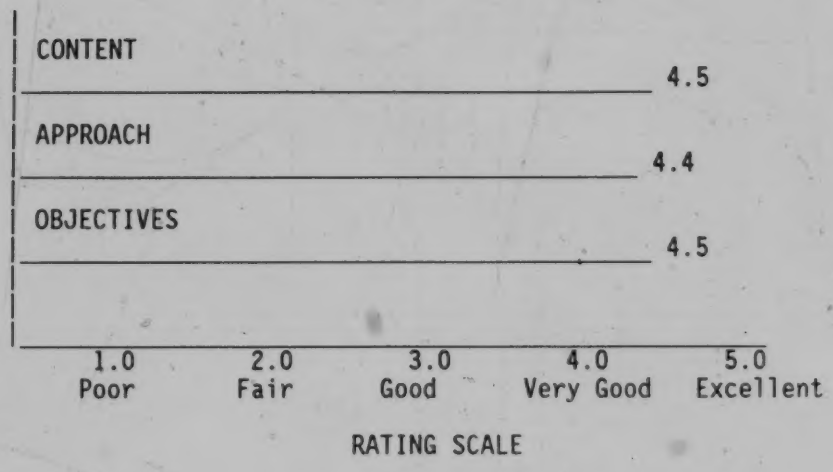
(OBJECTIVES, CONTENT AND APPROACH COMBINED)



NOTE: The figure outlines the average scores.

FIGURE 5

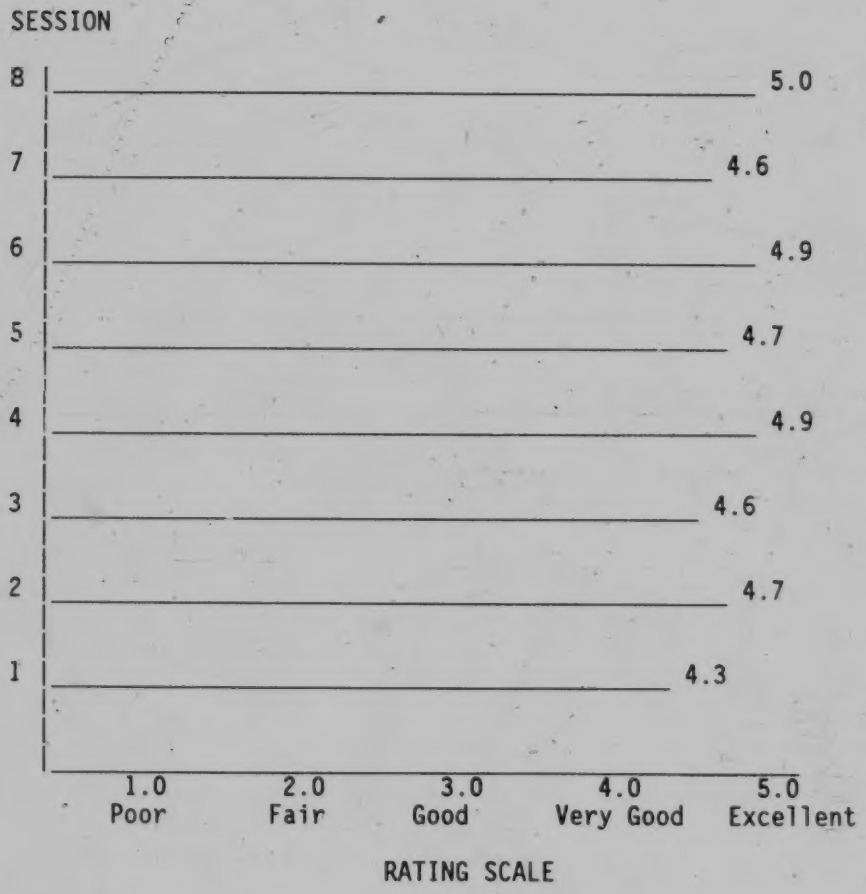
A MEAN COMPARISON OF EVALUATORS' OVERALL RATING OF CIT CONTENT, APPROACH AND OBJECTIVES



NOTE: The figure outlines the average scores.

FIGURE 6

A MEAN COMPARISON OF EVALUATORS' RATINGS OF THE USE OF ROGERIAN COUNSELING APPROACH IN CIT SESSIONS



NOTE: The figure outlines the average scores.

The high rating of session six and the relatively low rating of session three can (partially) be explained by the level of personal involvement and comfortableness of each session. The personal involvement and self-disclosure is maximized in sessions six and eight. In session six there is an opportunity to discuss changing roles within the family and feelings related to sharing worries regarding the changed family. In this session group members were openly supportive in understanding each others difficulties in coping with change. Although session three offered some experiential components, this session required a creative writing experience which may have been problematic for some students with lowered language arts skills. Revisions to the CIT program were made on the basis of the ratings and the written comments and suggestions. The revisions to the CIT program will be discussed further in the chapter. The generally high ratings by the evaluators were confirmed in their general comments about each session. All comments made by the outside evaluators are included in Appendix E.

Summation of External Evaluators' Suggestions

The evaluators' comments and suggestions on the individual sessions proved to be most useful and are summarized in Appendix E. The evaluators offered suggestions for the various sessions and these are summarized below:

1. One evaluator pointed out that 'kids may not understand the concept of positive or the meaning of positive'.

2. It was suggested by one evaluator that in session one the introduction re: divorce as a common experience was not done clearly and that perhaps a different approach be required.
3. One evaluator expressed a desire for the rules re: confidentiality be done prior to sharing and that before the children are paired off the activity be demonstrated.
4. It was pointed out by one evaluator that the room and physical facilities were not conducive to group work.
5. Two of the evaluators stated that there was a need in session two to spend more time on the 'masks' excercise and the need for more concrete examples for the types of messages being sent.
6. One evaluator indicated that more time should be spent on the sharing of the fun experience in session two.
7. Uneasiness was expressed by one evaluator in session three regarding the comment about the film that 'the game goes on', which was viewed as being somewhat superficial and almost a band-aid approach.
8. One evaluator commented that the letter and story were too rushed in session three.
9. In session four, one evaluator pointed out the need to include the pre-divorce stage in the stages of grieving.
10. It was suggested by one evaluator that the 'Loss Tree' exercise was too long and the role playing was too rushed in session four.
11. Two evaluators pointed out that the saying good-bye excercise in session five may not be appropriate.

12. It was suggested that more visuals for stages of grieving and types of families be developed to make material more concrete in session five.
13. One evaluator stated that the use of words such as 'transition' and 'family of origin' were too difficult in session five.
14. One evaluator indicated that session five was 'a bit too long' and the 'children appeared to be restless'.
15. One evaluator suggested that rather than designating 'negatives' versus 'positives' in session seven, that the negatives be viewed as positives ie. 'I don't have many friends' viewed positively as 'I have time to read'.
16. It was suggested that an alternative to the outline drawing in session seven be a drawing of the profile of hands and feet.
17. It was pointed out by one evaluator that the Kinetic Family Drawing be omitted from session eight and that more time be spent on the letter to the parents, as this presented a nice culminating activity.
18. Two evaluators indicated that the video sound was somewhat inaudible in sessions three, five, six and eight.

Students' Evaluations

Qualitative information was collected for this study and included session and program evaluation in the form of student open-ended questionnaires. The children's evaluation forms centered on issues related to learnings and helpfulness of the sessions and the total

program, to comfort in the group setting, and to questions related to session and program content (Appendix B).

Session Evaluation. Evaluations were completed by the students for each session (Appendix B). Comments will be discussed related to learnings and helpfulness of each session, to comfort in the group setting and to session content. The comments of learnings and helpfulness for the sessions will be discussed along the following dimensions: (a) understanding feelings pertaining to the divorce; and (b) understanding that others share similar feelings. In session 1, three of the students indicated that this session helped them to 'let out or share their feelings.' In session 2, five of the students indicated that they learned that 'it is okay to talk about feelings and that you don't have to hide feelings.' In session 3, two students indicated that they learned 'about other people's feelings and that it's good to let out your feelings', while one student commented that 'you can't blame yourself for your parents' getting a divorce.' One student indicated that this session helped by 'talking about our worries' and another stated that 'not blaming your feelings on other people and to talk when mom and dad separate.' Five students indicated in session 4 that they learned 'about other peoples feelings and that other kids are going through the same thing.' Four students reported that this session helped them to 'discuss their feelings' and two students made comments about increased self-esteem, eg. 'Feeling better about myself...it lets out all the bad feelings...when I first came and all the kids talked I knew I wouldn't be embarrassed to talk', and 'I'm feeling better about

myself...a feeling more people are going through this.' In session 5, two students indicated that they 'learned about other people's feelings' and 'different kinds of families' and that this session helped by 'seeing other pictures about what other kids did' and by 'talking about your families.' Three students in session 6 indicated that they learned that 'other kids have worries too'. One student in session 7 indicated that 'I learned that others liked me', and another student learned that 'I'm special'. One student indicated that 'I learned that it's not our fault that they got divorced'.

All students consistently indicated that they were comfortable in the group, with comments such as the following: 'because I am around kids that have the same problem'; 'because we got to tell what we liked and didn't like'; 'because I like it'; 'because there were other people'; 'around kids that have the same problem'; 'it was fun'; 'because I like the other people'; 'I was talking about my feelings'; 'talk with somebody who understands'; 'I'm around other kids'; 'there's other kids in it...kids can listen to my feelings.'

Regarding session content, four students in session 1 reported that the best thing in the group was the drawing, and three students liked it when they asked each other questions. In session 2, two students enjoyed 'doing the star' and two students thought the best thing was 'laying down and floating on the cloud', however, one student didn't like it when 'we were lying down.' Three students reported that the movie was the best thing in session 3, with one student also including 'putting anger in the bag.' Four students in session 4 indicated that the best thing that happened was the playdough, while another student felt it was

'letting out our feelings.' One student liked it when 'I shared my feelings; sharing about what my dad said about he loved me.' Two students reported that the best thing was looking at the pictures in session 5, and another student indicated that 'it was writing down who the family was.' One student commented in session 7 that the best thing that happened was 'that I met new friends'.

Program Evaluation. Program evaluations were requested from the students upon completion of the CIT program (Appendix B). Two students indicated that a major learning about separation and divorce was that 'it wasn't my fault', while another student indicated that 'it's okay to have parents divorced.' One student reported that this group helped by 'getting feelings out', while another student reported that 'it was not my fault...it helped me find my feelings.' All students reported feeling comfortable in the group with the cited reasons being that there were other kids to talk to and that it was fun. All students indicated that they felt safe to talk about feelings and problems with two students stating 'because they have the same problems'; another stating 'because I met some new friends'; with two others stating 'because it helped me' and 'I felt good talking about our feelings.' All group members indicated that they got to know other group members by 'talking'. Four group members indicated that they received support from other group members by 'the flower and the circle'; 'the other kids and Corinne'; 'giving me suggestions', and 'by talking.' All group members indicated that they liked the program with three students indicating that it was fun, another reporting that there 'was other kids', and another stating

that 'we did some activities.' Two students indicated that the part of the program they liked most was the painting, two others indicated that they liked talking about their feelings, and one student stated that 'it helps me feel better about myself.' One student indicated that the part of the program liked least was 'some talking'. Three students indicated that they were able to talk about things that they may have not been able to before, such as, 'getting feelings out', and 'about parents'. All students indicated that other children would like to participate in this program, with three students indicating 'to help them', another 'because it was fun', and another 'because they need someone to talk to.' All students reported that this program should be offered to other children of separation and divorce. Comments such as the following were stated:

'So they don't keep it inside.'

'Because other kids some don't want to talk orally.'

'Because it will help them find their feelings.'

'Because it helps you express your feelings about divorce.'

'So they don't think it's their fault.'

Parent Evaluations

Program evaluations were requested from the parents upon completion of the CIT program (Appendix B). The parent evaluation form related to program content and to program expectations, with questions also centering on issues relating to change. All forms were returned and the parents indicated they were pleased with the initial interview and the information given regarding the program objectives. Parents expressed

satisfaction with the intervention and reported that the group had resulted in some learning. The learnings parents felt their children had acquired was they were feeling better about themselves, were more confident, were better able to discuss feelings and problems in a positive manner and they realized the divorce was not their fault. Parents indicated that this program continue to be available and be instituted in other schools. All parent quotations are included below:

Program Content -

'I was very pleased, that finally a program such as this was available for my son, and other children. From the parent meeting I feel it did all the children alot of good.'

'I feel all program objectives were met and dealt with in a sufficient manner.'

'Really excited and thought this would be an excellent program for children in divorced families.'

'I strongly recommend that this program be continued in Meyonohk and all schools. When we first separated, I could not find a program of this nature for my son. Sure you could take the child to a psychologist, but it takes money (single parents don't have) and with the other children I feel they realize sooner they're not alone, and group discussion with other kids helps speed the grieving and they learn a lot more. A program of this nature should be accessible to every family going through divorce or separation. Too often the parent can't make the child realize it was not his/her fault. And more often than not the parent is grieving enough and can not deal with the children. It surprised me the "courts" could offer mediation for the adults and not offer some kind of program for the children. I really hope this program can continue in our school and many others. It's for the benefit of our children.'

'Absolutely ! Everyone I spoke to about this program, felt it was a long time coming. They would like this program in their schools.'

Program Expectations -

'I had hoped that this program would help them to come through the divorce adjustment easier. Yes, from my part these expectations have been met.'

'For my son I expected him to understand that the divorce was not his fault, and that "mom and dad" were not getting back together. Also for him to know it wasn't just his family, there are other families it happens to also. For myself, I hoped the program would give us a chance to communicate again on a more friendlier basis. These expectations have been met- my son has started to talk to me again about things that are making him sad or angry. I feel with the help of this program we have climbed over a major hurdle. Our family does not have the tension it once had. We know we can discuss a topic calmly.'

'That talking and listening to other children would make him feel more comfortable about the divorce. But more importantly talking about things that he could never say to me. Yes, these expectations were met- I think he needed to hear from someone, other than myself, that it wasn't his fault, and also that he was not alone.'

'To build self-esteem. Yes, this expectation has been met.'

'Realize that other children were feeling the same way she was, to talk to other people. Yes, I think that they were all met.'

Issues Relating To Change -

'A positive change, she has learned how to like herself.'

'Yes, my son's self-esteem and confidence has risen a lot. He no longer has the anger he once did. Before he would let the anger build inside until the littlest of things set it off, he would start yelling at me and tell me he was going to live somewhere else if the divorce would come up. Now if something is bothering him he will tell me and we together work something out. He no longer feels that things were his fault, giving him the confidence to make some decisions on his own. All positive changes- self confidence, self-esteem, can once again relate his feelings, can discuss problems without "tears" and feeling that its all his fault.'

'For us there haven't been too many changes. There are a lot more ahead. I feel this prepared my son for the coming changes and it will definitely help him to adjust.'

'There have been some real positive changes- he is feeling better about himself, more confident and dealing with problems in a more positive manner. He is not fighting and is a lot calmer and not as hyper, with less inappropriate behavior.'

'Some positive changes, she has been allowed to talk about how she felt, and her attitude about herself is better.'

Revision of the CIT Program Based on Evaluations

The feedback from the evaluators and students provided constructive criticism and suggestions and as a result a revised version of the CIT program was completed (See Appendix I). An attempt was made to incorporate in this revision the suggestions from the outside evaluators, students and parents. Summarized below are the revisions that were made to the CIT program based on the evaluations:

(a) In session one the use of the word 'positive' was omitted. Group rules were discussed prior to the getting acquainted exercise. In the getting acquainted exercise a statement was added to include a discussion regarding the feelings involved in speaking in a group and the interviewing was demonstrated by the facilitator. The room was changed to a larger, more private area.

(b) The discussion regarding the good thoughts exercise was omitted to allow more time on the defences activities in session two. More examples were included in the centering exercise.

(c) A statement was omitted from the film exercise regarding "the game goes on" in session three. Listing ways of expressing anger on the back of the "Feeling Star" was replaced with a discussion regarding the messages in their anger. Writing the consequences of anger on the Feeling Star" and the general discussion in the wrapping up time were omitted to allow more time for the letter writing.

(d) The "Loss Tree Worksheet" activity was slightly modified to omit the brainstorming activity and to omit the discussion regarding the changed family in session four. Visuals were added to make the stages of grief more concrete. The discussion about being in the group was omitted in the wrapping-up time.

(e) It was suggested that the saying good-bye objective and the symbolically saying good-bye to the family of origin were not appropriate and were omitted in session five. The words 'family of origin' were simplified to 'changed family'. A discussion regarding how families show care and love was included in the family uniqueness exercise. The writing exercise involving the Kinetic Family Drawings was omitted, however, the discussion regarding positive statements about their families was included in the family specialness worksheet. The painting exercise was modified by using plasticine. The centering exercise was omitted from the wrapping-up time.

(f) The painting exercise was modified to include as an option painting the profile of the hands and feet in session seven. A statement was omitted regarding positive and negative aspects about themselves and a reframing statement was added.

(g) A statement was included in the family letters activity to allow time to decorate their letters and to discuss the content of their letters in session eight. The Kinetic Family Drawing activity was omitted from the wrapping-up time.

PART II: Experimental Phase

Introduction

The revised CIT program was utilized to test the null hypotheses that there would be no significant differences among the treatment group and control group in terms of pre-and post-scores on the following measures:

1. Self-report scores on self-concept as measured by the Culture-Free Self Esteem Inventory (SEI),
2. Self-report scores on divorce adjustment as measured by the Children's Attitude Toward Divorce questionnaire.

To test the null hypotheses, a two-way analysis of variance was performed on the data collected for the two variables. Random assignment was not possible and, therefore, a nonequivalent control-group design was used with the following distinguishing features: administration of a pretest and postest to both the treatment group and the control group, and non-random assignment of subjects to the group. This design controlled for main effects of history, maturation, testing, and instrumentation. However, it does not control for purposes of external validity and there is limited generalizability to other populations.

Self-Esteem Measure

There is no significant difference between the treatment and control group's mean scores on self-esteem as measured by the Culture-Free Self Esteem Inventory (SEI). Thus hypothesis 1, that there will be no significant difference in self-esteem scores of the treatment and control groups after participation in the treatment program, is accepted. However, the Parental subscale (perceived relationships with the parents) is significant at $p = <.008$, and two other subscale levels including General Self (perceived general self-concept) and School (perceived academic or school-related self-concept) indicates positive trends towards improved self-esteem. A comparison of the treatment and control groups' mean scores on pre-and post-tests are reported on Table I.

TABLE I

Analysis of Variance - Groups by Time - on the Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory

Source	df	M.S.	F	P
Between	9			
Groups	1	0.00	0.00	.999
Error	8	37.15		
Within	10			
Time	1	33.80	11.27	.010
Groups X Time	1	0.20	0.07	.803
Error	8	3.00		

Table I includes a comparison of the treatment and control groups' mean scores on self-esteem pre-and post-tests.

Table II illustrates one of five subscales on the self-esteem measure, that of home-related or perceived parent-child relationships. The summary of the parental subscale is included because it is significant at the .008 level of confidence and also because that aspect of self-esteem, home-related or the perceived relationships with the parents, has particular relevance to divorce adjustment.

TABLE II

Analysis of Variance - Groups by Time of the Parental Subscale on the Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory

Source	df	M.S.	F	P
Between	9			
Groups	1	1.25	1.47	.260
Error	8	0.85		
Within	10			
Time	1	0.45	4.50	.067
Groups X Time	1	1.25	12.49	.008*
Error	8	0.10		

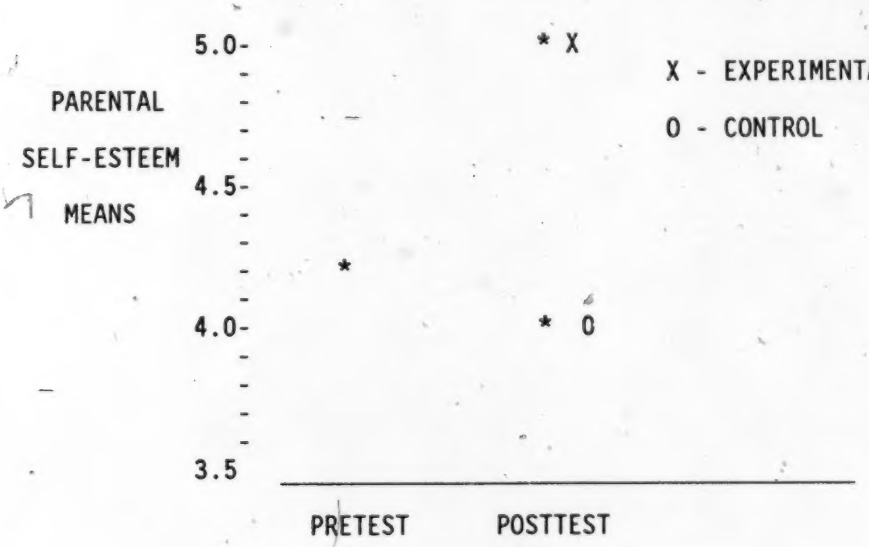
* P<.008

Table II includes a summary of the parental subscale score results which were significant.

Figure 7 outlines the nature of the interaction between groups (experimental and control) and time (difference between pre-and post-test scores), which indicates that the experimental group parental self-esteem scores improved more than the control group parental self-esteem scores. This suggests the treatment program was effective in elevating the children's parental self-esteem scores and there was improved self-esteem in the children's perception of the parent-child relationship.

Figure 7

Interaction Between Groups and Time of the Parental Subscale on the Dimension of Self-Esteem



Divorce Adjustment Measure

There is no significant difference between the experimental and control group's mean scores on divorce adjustment as measured by the Children's Attitude Toward Divorce (CATD) questionnaire. Thus hypothesis 2, that there will be no significant difference in divorce adjustment scores of the treatment and control groups after participation in the treatment program, is accepted. Table III contains a summary of the results.

TABLE III

Analysis of Variance - Groups by Time - on the Childrens' Attitude Towards Divorce Questionnaire

Source	df	M.S.	F	P
Between	9			
Groups	1	8.45	0.47	0.51
Error	8	17.75		
Within	10			
Time	1	61.25	4.29	0.07
Groups X Time	1	1.25	0.08	0.77
Error	8	14.25		

The two open-ended statements at the end of the CATD questionnaire were not scored. However, the comments by the students were assessed to understand their individual perspectives regarding their divorce experiences.

Summarized below are the student comments pre- and post-treatment:

Pre-Treatment:

Divorce is...

- when your parents live in separate homes.
- not very fun because you might want to live with both parents in a family but you can't and it's hard to choose who you want to live with.
- not a personal matter but a family matter between father, son and mother. It's good to talk about with your parents.
- I do not know.
- when your parents don't quite love each other anymore and don't want to live with each other.

My experience with divorce is..,

- that my feelings get hurt when parents get divorced.
- that divorce is not good because I want to live with my dad and my mom so it is hard for me to choose who to live with.
- my feelings about divorce are not mean. Sometimes I feel hollow inside because no one loves me.
- I do not know.
- that it's best for them but I do not want it to happen. When my friend said that their parents are getting a divorce I said my mom and dad are not going to to get one. I guess I was wrong.

Post-Treatment:

Divorce is...

- when your parents don't live together.
- when the parents divorce and it is how they feel about each other.
- fighting over things and property.
- when people do not live together.
- people who married and don't love each other.

My experience with divorce is...

- mad, because it's not good.
- that it's not my fault that thet get divorced and you can't make them get back together.
- angry, mad and frustrated about it.
- very good.
- sad, because I like both of my parents.

Summarized in Table IV are pre-post means and standard deviations for both groups for the Children's Attitude Toward Divorce (CATD) questionnaire and the Culture Free Self-Esteem Inventory, including the subscales of General Self, Social, School and Parents.

TABLE IV

Pre-Post Means and Standard Deviations for Both Groups On the CATD and SEI

	Experimental (n = 5)		Control (n = 5)	
Measure	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
CATD				
M	16.20	20.20	15.40	18.40
SD	3.70	6.72	1.95	1.14
SEI				
M	17.40	20.20	17.60	20.00
SD	2.97	3.03	5.90	5.24
General Self				
M	7.60	8.20	6.60	8.00
SD	1.95	1.92	2.61	2.12
Social				
M	2.40	3.00	3.60	4.40
SD	.55	1.00	1.67	2.19
School				
M	3.20	4.00	3.20	4.40
SD	.84	1.23	1.92	.89
Parental				
M	4.20	5.00	4.20	4.00
SD	.44	.00	.83	1.00

Summary

Part I, which provided results of the evaluative phase of the study, indicated that a mean comparison of the outside evaluators' overall ratings of the CIT content was 4.5, approach 4.4 and objectives 4.5, on a scale with 1= poor, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=very good and 5= excellent. The outside evaluators' ratings and comments suggested that the CIT program was well received. The learnings cited from the student evaluations were they no longer blamed themselves for the divorce and they were better able to express their feelings. The learnings the parents felt their children acquired were they felt better about themselves, were more confident, were better able to discuss feelings and problems, and they realized the divorce was not their fault. The student and parent comments also suggested that the CIT program was well received and that there is an indication of positive changes as a result of participation in the program.

Part II of the results involved the investigation of the effect of the revised CIT program on the self-concept and divorce adjustment of elementary school students ages 9-12 years. To test the null hypotheses, a two-way analysis of variance was performed on the data collected for the Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory and the Children's Attitude Towards Divorce questionnaire. Results of this part of the study indicated that there were no significant differences between the CIT experimental group and the control group in terms of pre-and post-test scores on either of the instruments administered to measure self-concept or divorce adjustment. Therefore, the null hypotheses was accepted. Although the parental subscale on the self-esteem measure was

significant at P<.008, this result should be interpreted with caution because of the small number of items (n=5) on the subtest.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The objectives of the present chapter are to summarize and discuss the findings of the research study, to present limitations and delimitations of the study, and to offer suggestions for further research. The chapter is organized into the following sections: Summary and Conclusions, Discussion and Implications for Further Research.

Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to evaluate an intervention group program for children of divorce developed by the researcher entitled Children In Transition (CIT), and to also investigate the effects of the revised CIT program on the self-concept and divorce adjustment of older elementary school-aged children aged 9-12 years. The intervention was shaped by identifying psychological reactions of older elementary school-aged children (9-12 years) to parental divorce (Stolberg and Anker, 1984; Wallerstein, 1983), for example, feelings of self-blame, anger, a sense of isolation and stigma, and unresolved loss issues. The literature and research on loss issues and Wallerstein and Kelly's (1983) key psychological tasks for children of divorce also helped to shape the CIT intervention. The eight-session program included eight thematic group counseling sessions.

Part I, which provided results of the evaluative phase of the study, indicated that a mean comparison of the outside evaluators' overall ratings of the CIT content was 4.5, approach 4.4 and objectives

4.5, on a scale with 1= poor, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=very good and 5= excellent. The outside evaluators' ratings and comments suggested that the CIT program was well received. On a 5-point scale the overall combined results of the client-centered approach was 4.7.

The learnings cited from the student evaluations were that they no longer blamed themselves for the divorce and they were better able to express their feelings. The learnings the parents felt their children acquired were that they felt better about themselves, were more confident, were better able to discuss feelings and problems, and realized the divorce was not their fault. The student and parent comments also suggested that the CIT program was well received and that there is an indication of positive changes as a result of participation in the program.

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Discussion

Evaluative Phase

The CIT program was evaluated by three outside evaluators in terms of the following three guidelines: (1) objectives- how the sessions contributed to increased understanding of self in relationship to parental divorce; (2) content- the material that was included in the program; (3) approach used in presenting the material, e.g., films, role playing, discussion, brainstorming, etc. Each session was rated on a 5-point scale and overall combined program results were: ojectives- 4.5; content- 4.5; approach- 4.4. These results indicated that the following primary objectives were addressed by the CIT program:

(1) to provide a safe, non-threatening atmosphere for children to clarify, reorganize and understand feelings and emotions pertaining to the divorce,

(2) to help children understand that others share similar feelings associated with parental divorce including feelings of anger, guilt, shame and rejection,

(3) to allow children the opportunity to explore the process of grieving in relation to the loss of their family of origin,

(4) to provide children with opportunities to enhance their self-esteem by participating in constructive interpersonal relationships with peers.

On a 5-point scale the overall combined results of the client-centered approach was 4.7, which indicated the researcher's counseling techniques were consistent with the attitudes and behaviors of empathy, positive regard and genuineness during the sessions. These

results suggested that the conditions of the therapeutic process in relation to Roger's client-centered approach (Patterson, 1980) were established.

Overall, the results indicated that the CIT program was well received by the outside evaluators, the students, and the parents. Constructive criticisms were put forward in an attempt to improve the quality of the treatment program and these comments were incorporated into a revised edition of the CIT program and is included in Appendix F.

With regard to program objectives, the results suggest changes in the following areas: (a) increased understanding of feelings and emotions pertaining to the divorce - the students were able to express and understand their feelings; (b) increased understanding that others share similar feelings associated with parental divorce - the students shared inner feelings and established friendships; (c) increased awareness of the process of grieving in relation to the loss of their family of origin - the students were able to understand that their feelings of anger and hurt were normal; (d) improvement in students' level of self-esteem - students reported feeling better about themselves.

The students and their parents expressed satisfaction with the intervention and reported that the sessions had resulted in some learning. The learnings cited by the children was that they no longer blamed themselves for the divorce, and that they were better able to express their feelings openly. The learnings the parents felt their children had acquired was that they were feeling better about

themselves, were more confident, were better able to discuss feelings and problems and that they realized the divorce was not their fault.

Parents made specific observations about children's tendency to blame themselves for the divorce and about learning adaptive ways to cope with anger. One parent wrote: "Before he would let the anger build inside until the littlest of things set it off, he would start yelling at me...Now if something is bothering him he will tell me and we together work something out. He no longer feels that things were his fault."

To help children's sense of aloneness, the intervention provided a supportive environment for sharing common feelings and experiences with peers. One child indicated she felt safe to talk about feelings and problems in the group "because I have met some new friends." In that atmosphere, children came to feel that they were not alone or different. A mother of a group member wrote: "...with the other children I feel they realize sooner they're not alone, and group discussion with other kids helps speed the grieving and they learn alot more." Participating in supportive exchanges with peers appeared to facilitate the building of bonds and the expression of feelings among group members.

Several parents wrote specifically about increases in self-worth and confidence. The experience helped children to discuss significant personal concerns directly with their parents and led to changes in feelings and behavior that generalized positively to the home situation. One parent wrote: " I feel with the help of this program we have climbed over a major hurdle. Our family does not have the tension it once had. We know we can discuss a topic calmly."

Experimental Phase

On the parental subtest of the self-esteem measure the statistically significant F ratio for the interaction effect indicated that the pretest-posttest difference for the experimental group is greater than the pretest-posttest difference of the control group (Refer to Table II). Figure 7 outlined the nature of the interaction between group (experimental and control) and time (difference between pre-and post-test scores), which indicated that the experimental group parental self-esteem scores improved more than the control group parental self-esteem scores. This suggested the treatment program was effective in elevating the parental subscale self-esteem group mean and that there was enhanced self-esteem relating to how participants felt about themselves in relation to their parents and their perceived parent-child relationship. However, this result should be interpreted with caution because of the small number of items (n=5) on the parental subscale and the small sample size.

The results indicated there was no significant difference in overall self-esteem or divorce adjustment. Although there appeared to be slight positive trends in overall self-esteem and the general and school self-esteem subscales, the results were not significant. One possible reason may be that an eight-week intervention that focused specifically on divorce-related issues is not powerful enough to produce change of overall perceived self-esteem or divorce adjustment. Self-concept and personal adjustment are difficult aspects of human behavior to measure, and it is questionnable as to how accurately and consistently

individuals are able to report information about themselves. Eldridge, Wilmer, Barcikowski, and Bauer (1977) reported that it is considered extremely difficult to identify items for a self-report scale that are effective in reflecting change in self-perception as reported by individuals.

Another consideration is that the positive gains made by the students may not have been captured by the dependent measures. Measurements need to be recognized only as indicators of program effectiveness, and should not be presumed to represent the totality of resultant changes. It is possible that no significant changes reflected a limitation in the measuring scales, and that unmeasured changes may have occurred.

Many children's divorce groups have used post-group interviews and written evaluations to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs and the findings are based on reports of students, parents and teachers (Cantor, 1979; Hammond, 1979; Green, 1978; Wilkinson and Bleck, 1977; Kalter, Pikar and Lesowitz, 1984; Ferrante, 1985; Freeman and Couchman, 1985). These studies suggested that in order to completely evaluate group counseling programs one must take into consideration feedback from the group members themselves and their parents.

One subscale on the self-esteem measure indicated that there was a significant increase in parental self-esteem which suggested an increase in the perceived parent-child relationship of the treatment group. In the evaluative phase of the study similar changes were identified and this was supported by the comments made by the parents regarding their child's increased self-esteem, confidence, and ability to communicate

feelings. Overall, results of the research study suggested that the CIT program helped children to express feelings pertaining to the divorce. This suggested the prpgram can enhance parent-child interactions, which has particular relevance to children's divorce adjustment.

Researcher's Observations and Impressions

As group facilitator of the treatment group I observed the students developing in positive ways throughout the program. Positive changes occurred over the eight sessions in two areas: (1) student participation in the group activities, and (2) student adjustment to issues relating to parental separation or divorce.

Student Participation

Some group members were initially hesitant to respond in the group discussions and appeared apprehensive of the group activities. Gradually the students became more comfortable with the group leader and each other, and they willingly shared their thoughts and feelings relating to their personal experiences with their parents' divorce. Students listened to each other's comments and stories about their families and experiences. They demonstrated caring and acceptance of each other by showing concern, sharing their own experiences and offering suggestions. The supportive atmosphere which evolved from these interactions strengthened the group cohesiveness and an identification with each other was apparent.

As the group progressed the facilitator observed a growing desire on the part of the students to participate in the activities. The

facilitator modelled participation by in the group activities which appeared to encourage the students to participate as well. Also, there was value in respectfully allowing group members the time to formulate their thoughts and feelings during the discussions.

Student Adjustment

The following issues were prevalent in the discussions.

(1) Although unscored, the Kinetic Family Drawing provided an effective introduction and opportunity to discuss each member's family. The issue of parental divorce immediately became focused as many students were undecided as to how to include the non-custodial parent.

(2) Sixty-percent of the students indicated in the 'Feeling Star Activity Sheet' exercise that they were feeling angry, frustrated, frightened, embarrassed, hurt and miserable and eighty-percent indicated that they felt unhappy, which supports the research which indicates that issues for this age group include feelings of anger, a sense of shame of being different, and feelings of sadness. Students initially found it difficult to talk about their feelings. Some were surprised that acting out (we talked a lot about this type of behavior in the classroom and on the playground) was a means of hiding feelings, e.g., anger, hurt, disappointment.

(3) Many students felt that in some way they were to blame for their parents' divorce. They reported that they initially didn't want to discuss their parents' divorce with their friends and teachers and they were worried that others would find out. Feelings of aloneness and isolation were issues expressed. Some students (especially the boys)

seemed relieved that there were positive ways of handling anger rather than yelling, kicking things, pushing, etc. The students were allowed to express their anger in session three using various modes. I felt there was a change in the group members after this session. They appeared to be more relaxed, more willing to verbally express themselves and more understanding of each others feelings. The students acknowledged that it was their parents' decision to get a separation or divorce.

(4) The students identified with the Children's Grief Process and Divorce Model developed by the researcher. The pre-separation stage was problematic for most children who expressed concerns over parental fighting and feelings of anxiety about who was going to care for them. Many of the students indicated on the Grief Process Worksheet that they had experienced shock, fear and fantasy that their parents would get back together (denial). All students indicated hurt and the majority of students reported self-blame (anger). Some students reported 'acting-out' and 'trying to be very good' behaviors (bargaining) and most students reported feelings of sadness (depression). One student indicated that 'things were different now, but okay' (acceptance). Each student was asked to indicate where he/she was in the grieving process and the following was indicated: one student reported temper-tantrums (anger); one student indicated fantasy that the parents will get back together (denial); two students reported sadness (depression); and one student indicated feeling that things are different now, but okay (acceptance). Normalizing the feelings and behaviors associated with grief appeared to help group members talk about their personal grief over the dissolution of their family of origin. Students expressed their

aloneness in that they were unable to talk to peers, other adults or their parents about how they were feeling. They expressed feelings of care and concern for both of their parents. Through sharing their concerns and feelings they appeared to understand how they could discuss and handle situations differently with their parents.

(5) In the 'Loss Tree' activity, many students indicated losses in terms of moving, losing friends and changing schools. All students identified with the loss of income for holidays and entertainment as an issue and reported the need for the custodial parent (their mothers) to work outside the home. Many students expressed feelings of resentment over the non-custodial parent taking items from the home that they considered personal possessions and also over taking family possessions such as furniture. The loss of relatives who would choose sides with either parent was an issue for some students. The students started to acknowledge that there was growth through loss and some positives of parental separation and divorce, e.g., parents not fighting as much, new friends, more time with each parent, etc.

(6) All students appeared to enjoy the activities regarding their favorite memories of the family of origin. In the 'Family Memories' and 'Family Photographs' exercises they openly discussed their favorite memories and shared their feelings of loss of that 'family' enjoying those times together in the future. The students identified with the loss of the family of origin and experiences missed with that family was an issue. Students acknowledged that their family was different now and that it would not be like it was before when both parents lived in the same house. They also acknowledged that holidays and special events,

e.g., birthdays would be different and supported each other in how to cope with the differences.

(6) Some students expressed difficulty in coping with another adult in the home due to remarriage. They expressed feelings and concerns that their parents were involved in other relationships when they 'should be together'. Students began to accept the other adults by talking more about them positively and by including them in their drawings and plasticine work.

(7) The 'Worry-Weight' activity helped to focus on a major issue for many students which was the lack of contact and dependability of the non-custodial parent. Students generally related concerns such as not seeing the parent regularly and a lack of acknowledgement of birthdays and unanswered responses to letters sent. One student emotionally expressed that he hadn't heard from his father in Ontario for over six months and that he hadn't seen him for over a year. Students were encouraged to discuss their concerns with the custodial parent and, as a result, this student's parents made plans for him and his brothers to visit their father at Christmas.

In summary, the students changed in positive ways by actively being involved with the group. Through sharing of feelings relating to their personal experiences they appeared to be more relaxed, less angry, and more spontaneous in their interactions in the group. This suggested to me that they were learning to adjust to their parents' divorce.

As group leader I felt the CIT program was beneficial for the group members. Although the dependent measures showed few positive gains, the

outside evaluators, the group members themselves, and the parents found the program of value.

Limitations and Delimitations

One limitation of the study is that the evaluations involved people directly involved in the program (i.e., parents and children) and the study's positive findings may in part reflect their positive expectations. Another limitation is the small number of subscale items on the self-esteem measure. Therefore, the statistically significant result should be interpreted with caution.

The statistical result also has limited generalizability due to the following sample characteristics: the sample was limited to a small sample of white, middle-class, suburban children whom the program served, and the sample was not random because principals and parents had to agree to participate in the study. An important step is assessing the program's more general utility by extending the model to different sociodemographic groups, which may call for socioculturally appropriate changes in content and method.

The present experiment appears to have some degree of "representativeness"- the degree to which the experimental reality approximates the theoretical reality - as the results were obtained in the natural environment (schools) and the students were actually experiencing parental divorce. This indicates that the results can be applied to other group counseling situations with some confidence. However, a limiting factor is the type of counseling approach that is required to facilitate a group. For this program the counselor will need

client-centered counseling skills as this approach is imperative to the success of the CIT program, and this will have to be taken into account when making any generalizations.

A delimitation is that little is known of the psychometric properties of one of the study's key measures (e.g., the CATD), and this measure needs further psychometric work concerning validity and reliability.

Concluding Remarks

The CIT program has been shown to have positive results from outside evaluator, parent and student comments and from an objective measure in the study. The results of this study are consistent with the results of other studies involving children's divorce groups reporting enhanced parent-child relationships (Ferrante, 1985; Freeman, 1984; and Freeman and Couchman, 1985; Kalter et. al., 1984; Stolberg and Garrison, 1985). The evaluative findings are encouraging in that the program appears to be helping the persons for whom it was designed.

If the overall findings are generalized beyond the experimental situation it can be postulated that the CIT program would be a welcome addition to any school guidance and counseling program. This research is intended to give counselors a rationale and format for leading groups of older elementary school-aged children. Parental divorce is a pressing relevant issue and it is apparent that there is a need in this area for some form of guidance program to be added to the agenda of school guidance programs. A basis for the success of a school-based program is that counselors be aware of issues and theories available for working

with children of divorce, which may require special training or workshops in this area.

Although children of divorce have been identified as a major group for preventive intervention, research indicates that few intervention programs have been developed that provide a comprehensive theoretical model in terms of reference, counseling approach and foundations for techniques employed or that directly address Wallerstein's key psychological tasks. The CIT program represents an attempt in this direction and the results indicate that the program deserves further attention in the school setting. In applying the program in the schools, the group approach would mean that the counselor would be able to extend services on a much broader basis, which can be more cost and time effective.

Parental divorce imposes adjustment demands on all those who are involved. Findings of this study suggests that an intervention for children of separation or divorce that emphasizes the provision of support, understanding of the grieving process and developing situationally relevant coping skills can help children to express feelings pertaining to the divorce. This suggests that the program can enhance parent and child interactions, which has particular relevance to children's divorce adjustment.

Suggestions for Further Research

Although the CIT program was minimally successful in bringing about a positive change in the dependent measures, it has been concluded it is a valuable and successful program based on the evaluations and

observations of the outside evaluators, the group members, and their parents as well as the group facilitator. Therefore, the following potential areas of related research are seen as meaningful.

(a) Curriculum development is a process in which evaluation efforts need to be done on a continuing basis. There is now a need for further implementation and evaluation of the revised CIT program in other schools. In this study, the population consisted of a small number of students and it would be of value to utilize a larger sample with students from more varied socio-economic backgrounds to evaluate if these results could be replicated.

(b) In this study the CIT program was implemented twice weekly over a four week period. It would be of value to investigate the weekly use of this program over eight weeks or a longer period of time, perhaps sixteen weeks, to determine if a longer program is powerful enough to produce change of perceived self-esteem or divorce adjustment.

(c) The present study has concerned itself with one possible area (the schools) in which the program might be applied. It would be worthwhile to include other agencies where group counseling of children might be considered, e.g., social service or family service agencies to evaluate the utility of this program beyond the school situation.

(d) In this study, post-testing involved the readministration of the two instruments utilized in pre-testing. Provisions should be made to develop alternate test forms so that subjects are not exposed to post-test items during pre-testing.

(e) It is suggested that further research studies use other techniques such as a case study approach, for example, utilizing case notes of parents' perceptions of their childrens' pre-and post-treatment. This would present other indicators of children's change in self-esteem or divorce adjustment.

(f) It would be of value to investigate the effects of the CIT program in each grade level, e.g., grade 4, grade 5, grade 6, and on a variety of situational factors. For example, the sample could be limited to those students whose parents have been separated or divorced for one year or four years or to those students who are living in blended families, etc. This would give added information on various family forms and add to the research literature.

Additional Suggestions:

1. The trend of the comments made by the outside evaluators indicated that the resource materials need to be made more concrete. It is suggested that the curriculum materials for each session be incorporated into a professional kit form using posters, charts, etc., to make the information more concrete and visually available.

2. It is recommended that counselors interested in implementing the CIT program receive inservice training to increase their knowledge and understanding of the effects of divorce on families and children and to acquire the theoretical orientations of the program as well as program facilitation skills. The researcher intends to

implement an inservice program for counselors interested in offering the CIT program.

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APPENDIX A

INSTRUMENTATION

Culture-Free SEI, Form B

Name: _____ Sex: M F Grade: 4 5 6

School: _____ Teacher: _____

Total: ___ G:___ S:___ A:___ P:___ L:___

Directions

Please mark each statement in the following way: If the statement describes how you usually feel, make a check mark in the "yes" column. If the statement does not describe how you usually feel, make a check mark in the "no" column. Please check only one column (either "yes" or "no") for each of the 30 statements. This is not a test, and there are no "right" or "wrong" answers.

	Yes	No
1. I wish I were younger.....	___	___
2. Boys and girls like to play with me.....	___	___
3. I usually quit when my school work is too hard...	___	___
4. My parents never get angry with me.....	___	___
5. I only have a few friends.....	___	___
6. I have lots of fun with my parents.....	___	___
7. I like being a boy/I like being a girl.....	___	___

8. I am a failure at school..... ___ ___

9. My parents make me feel that I am not good enough.___ ___

10. I usually fail when I try to do important things.___ ___

11. I am happy most of the time..... ___ ___

12. I have never taken anything that did not belong ___ ___
to me..... ___ ___

13. I often feel ashamed of myself..... ___ ___

14. Most boys and girls play games better than I do. ___ ___

15. I often feel that I am no good at all..... ___ ___

16. Most boys and girls are smarter than I am..... ___ ___

17. My parents dislike me because I am not good
enough..... ___ ___

18. I like everyone I know..... ___ ___

19. I am as happy as most boys and girls..... ___ ___

20. Most boys and girls are better than I am..... ___ ___

21. I like to play with children younger than I am.. ___ ___

22. I often feel like quitting school..... ___ ___

23. I can do things as well as other boys and girls. ___ ___

24. I would change many things about myself if I could..... ___ ___

25. There are many times when I would like to run away from home..... ___ ___

26. I never worry about anything..... ___ ___

27. I always tell the truth..... ___ ___

28. My teacher feels that I am not good enough..... ___ ___

29. My parents think I am a failure..... ___ ___

30. I worry a lot..... ___ ___

CHILDREN'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS DIVORCE QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions

Please circle the answer that best describes how you usually feel. Please check only one answer for each of the ten statements. This is not a test, and there are no "right" or "wrong" answers.

1. It is my fault that my parents are separated or divorced.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

2. Other children of divorce don't share similar feelings about the divorce that I do.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

3. I don't understand why parents get separated or divorced.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

4. It is difficult to express how I feel about my parents separation or divorce.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

5. Most of the time I feel angry that my parents are separated or divorced.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

6. If I'm really good my parents will get back together.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

7. Parents should live together as parents no matter what their problems are.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

8. I can accept that my parents are separated or divorced.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

9. Most of the time I feel very sad that my parents are separated or divorced.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

10. I am angry at my parents for getting separated or divorced.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

Divorce is....

My experience with divorce is....

APPENDIX B

CHILDREN IN TRANSITION PROGRAM

EVALUATION FORMS

EVALUATION FORM- EXTERNAL EVALUATOR

SESSION NUMBER:_____ DATE:_____

Part I

Instructions: Using the following guidelines please reflect on this session and make comments regarding:

a. objectives- how the session does or does not contribute to the four overall program objectives: sharing of feelings pertaining to the divorce, increased understanding of self and others, exploration of the process of grieving (directly or indirectly), improvement of self concept.

b. content- the type of material that is used in each session, including how the content does or does not contribute to the session objectives.

c. approach used in presenting the material ie. discussion, role-playing, etc.

d. please refer to other issues you may feel relevant.

Objectives:

Content:

Approach:

Other Issues:

Please rate this session on a five point scale on each of the following dimensions: objectives, content, approach.

Rating:

(1) poor (2) fair (3) good (4) very good (5) excellent

(a) Objectives	1	2	3	4	5
(b) Content	1	2	3	4	5
(c) Approach	1	2	3	4	5

Part II

To obtain an objective analysis of appropriate methods and techniques consistent with the client-centered approach, the researcher has drawn from the literature the following statements which are descriptive of facilitative conditions of that relationship.

Instructions: Upon review of the videotaped session, please use the checklist and rating scale to determine if the counselor's approach is consistent with these attitudes and behaviors of empathy, positive regard and genuineness during the session.

Rating:
(1) poor (2) fair (3) good (4) very good (5) excellent

	RATING
1. Shows respect for the individual.	____
2. Shows interest in group members as individuals.	____
3. Demonstrates a sense of humor.	____
4. Responds verbally and nonverbally without evaluative judgement.	____
5. Provides emotional encouragement and support.	____
6. Is reflective in communicating the understanding of the individual's point of view.	____
7. Conveys warmth with supporting non-verbal behaviors, such as smiling, eye-contact and leaning towards the individual and group members.	____
8. Tone of voice indicates genuine concern and ability to understand the individual's feelings.	____
9. Communicates empathetic understanding to the group member(s).	____
10. Discusses what appears to be important to the group member(s).	____
11. Uses understandable and appropriate words.	____
12. Uses verbal responses ie. "I see", "Mmm", "Yes".	____
13. Uses paraphrasing.	____
14. Shows flexibility in session structuring.	____

SESSION EVALUATION FORM- CHILDRENS'

Instructions: It would be very helpful to understand how you feel and think about the session we just shared. Could you please complete each question as honestly as you can. You need not put your name on this form, but may do so if you wish. Thank-you.

1. Today I learned that...

2. The best thing that happened in the group was...

3. I liked it when...

4. I didn't like it when...

5. This session helped me by...

6. Did you feel comfortable in the group? Why or Why Not?

7. Did you think the session was long enough?

8. Was there any part of the session that you would like to spend more time on? Less time on?

Other comments or suggestions?

PROGRAM EVALUATION FORM- CHILDRENS'

INSTRUCTIONS: It would be very helpful to understand how you feel and think about the program. Could you please try to answer the questions as honestly as you can. You need not put your name on this form, but are welcome to if you so wish. Thank-you.

1. Did you feel comfortable in the group setting? Why? Why Not?

2. Did you feel safe to talk about feelings and problems? Why? Why Not?

3. I got to know other group members by....

4. Did you receive support from other group members? If so, how?

5. I liked the program because...

6. The part of the program I liked most was...

7. The part of the program I liked least was...

8. What was a major learning for you about separation and divorce?

9. This group helped me by...

10. Do you feel that you were able to talk about things that you may have not been able to before? If so, what kind of things?

11. Do you think that other children would like to participate in this program? Why? Why Not?

12. Do you think that this program should be offered to other children of separation or divorce? Why? Why Not?

PARENT PROGRAM EVALUATION FORM

Instructions: We were pleased to have your child(ren) participate in the "Children In Transition" program. It would be very helpful to know what you think about this program. The time you take to complete the following questions will be invaluable in evaluating the program and will be greatly appreciated. Thank-you!

1. What has been your overall impression of the program from information received at the initial interview ?

2. Do you feel satisfied that you were given adequate information regarding the program objectives?

3. What were your expectations of this program for your child? for yourself? for your family?

4. Do you feel that some or all of these expectations have been met?

5. Do you feel that your daughter or son has benefited from this program? If so, please state why and give any specific information that you would like to share.

6. Have you noticed any changes in your child's attitude or behavior that you feel is a result of the program? Positive changes? Negative changes?

7. Would you recommend that this program continue to be available at Meyonohk School, or be instituted in other elementary schools?

Please feel free to offer further comments or suggestions:

Thank-you for your time and interest.

Corinne Whelan

APPENDIX C

PARENT NEWSLETTER AND CONSENT FORM

Dear Parent:

This letter is being sent home to all fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students. I would like to request permission for your child to participate in a University of Alberta research study. The main purpose of this study is to evaluate a program entitled "Children In Transition", which is a program developed for children who have experienced parental separation or divorce. The study is being conducted by Corinne Whelan for her master thesis under the supervision of Dr. D.D. Sawatzky, Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Alberta.

Elizabeth-Kubler Ross notes that children go through many losses. In the process of divorce, family transition creates a permanent loss of the structure to which the family members are accustomed. The focus of this program is to encourage children to explore the process of grieving in relation to the loss of the family of origin. Further, this program is designed to promote positive self-esteem, to help children better understand the divorce process and the changes in family relationships. The program will involve eight group sessions which will be approximately one-hour long and offered on a bi-weekly basis for four weeks. The group will provide a safe and confidential setting for students to share their thoughts and feelings regarding the divorce process. Group topics will include: why parental divorce happens, feelings and defences, being told, the grieving process, changing roles and coping strategies, specialness and looking ahead.
Pre and post self-esteem scores and divorce adjustment scores will be obtained, however, in the final report group scores will be presented and individual names will not be used. The sessions will be videotaped for program evaluation purposes only. <u>All information will be kept completely confidential</u>. If you wish to know your child's results concerning scores, I will be available for consultation. Your child is free to withdraw from the program at any time.

Results of this study will give us much needed information on the value and need for services for children in family transition. If you would like your child to participate in this important study, please sign the attatched permission sheet and ask your child to return it to his/her homeroom teacher as soon as possible. I will be contacting those parents who feel that their child would benefit from involvement in this group. An evening meeting will be arranged to discuss the CIT program objectives and to overview the program content and sessions. Feedback from group members and parents regarding this program will be encouraged throughout this study. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 463-1680 (evenings).

Thank-you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Corinne Whelan
Graduate Student

D.D. Sawatzky
Professor
Department of Educational Psychology
University of Alberta

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

I _____(parent's name) agree to allow _____(child's name) to participate in a University of Alberta research study conducted by Corinne Whelan (Master of Education student in Educational Psychology) under the supervision of Dr. D. Sawatzky, Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Alberta. I understand that all individual data collected for the research study will be kept completely confidential and that group sessions will be videotaped for program evaluation purposes.

Signature:_____

Date:_____

APPENDIX D

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FORM

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FORM

ALL INFORMATION ON THIS FORM WILL BE COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL

Child's name:_____ Sex: F___ M___

Birthday: _____ Age: _____

Grade in school:_____ Teacher:_____

Your Name:_____

Telephone number: home _____ work _____

1. What is your relationship with this child? (check one only)

mother____ father____ stepmother____ stepfather _____

other_____ (please explain)_____

_____

2. Who does this child live with most of the time? (check one only)

mother____ father ____ mother and stepfather ____

father and stepmother ____ mother and male companion ____

father and female companion ____ other ____ (please

explain _____

3. How many months has your child lived in the family arrangement checked in #2? months ____

4. How many months has it been since this child has lived with both biological parents on an ongoing basis?

months ___

5. Please list the names and ages of brother s and sisters (biological and step) that are presently living with this child most of the time.

Sisters	Brothers
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

6. Who has legal custody of the child?

mother ____ father ____ both mother and father ____

7. What are your expectations of this program? For your child? For yourself? For your family?

8. Have you noticed changes in your child since the separation or divorce? If so, in what way(s)?

9. How do you feel your child has adjusted to the separation or divorce?

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated. Thank-you.

Corinne Whelan

APPENDIX E

OUTSIDE EVALUATORS' COMMENTS OF CIT SESSIONS

OUTSIDE EVALUATORS' COMMENTS OF CIT SESSIONS

C- Content; A- Approach; O- Objectives

Session One

C- Working in dyads very effective method for introduction of members. Drawing exercise of family excellent activity, projective, feelings expressed.

C- What is purpose of sharing info? Do kids understand concept of positive or meaning of positive?

C- Pairing them off got the kids involved. Opening, you sharing your family was good.

C- Especially evident was the effort to begin to develop a trust in the group and not only did individuals did not have to reveal if they chose not to, but their feelings and confidentiality would be respected in anything that was shared.

O- Atmosphere of support, warmth and fun- very successfully achieved, fun, less so- perhaps fun exercise could have been included. "Get acquainted"- very well done- perhaps even more here to establish a sense of 'we-ness'.

O- Excellent discussion of rules of confidentiality, privacy and communication.

O- This session appeared to concentrate on self-esteem, safety in the group and improvement of self-esteem.

O- The whole session seemed directed toward improved self-understanding and getting to know the others.

A- Discussion very good. Gentleness, respectfulness modelled by facilitator- excellent manner.

A- Brief introduction re: divorce as common experience not to clearly done here- perhaps other approach required. Homework excellent, but how many will do?

A- Rules re: confidentiality prior to sharing. Before you paired them off, demonstrate activity. Set up rules first- work sharing in feeling gradually- must develop trust first. Family drawings in private- in groups a tendency to copy.

A- Room and physical facilities not too conductive to group work- distractors should be eliminated.

Session Two

C- Excellent review of rules for group work.

C- Use of feeling star excellent. Sharing of feelings re: divorce good stuff, 'loaded material' here.

C- Good warm-up. Stand-up activity good- gets them moving and involved.

C- Good topic on awareness of how we hide feelings.

C- The "sharing of feeling stupid" was very bravely presented- this could have perhaps have been 'entered into' more by other members- how is.....feeling?"

C- The lack of time spent of an excercise eg. 'masks' tends to dilute the strength of the excercise.

C- The content of the session appeared to meet the objectives- progress made in the area of sharing of feelings. Because the audio was so low it was difficult to assertain all of the content.

O- Good review of rules. Good job of eliciting feelings.

O- Getting in touch with feelings, understanding feelings, excellent.

O- All of the objectives were covered with an emphasis on feelings- especially related to divorce.

O- The facilitator has excellent skills re: working with children- she should train others!

O- Excellent validation and involvement on part of facilitator.

A- Eye-opener exercise very good. Centering exercise- excellent. Sharing of fun experience too hasty- perhaps offer time so each could share.

A- Good empathy for ____ (after you patted her, she lay down).

A- Excellent encouragement given by facilitator. Excellent acting out of feelings, use of message cards.

A- The activities seemed to hold the attention of the children and be productive of meaningful discussion- however, the quality of the audio makes this assessment difficult.

A- Messages being sent- more concrete examples may have been used. Use of mask, very hasty.

A- The star and drawing activities seemed especially fruitful.

A- Excellent new room, much more free of distractions.

Session Three

C- The film and story seemed like good stimuli to produce the thoughts and emotions sought after. The story you read- good concept and good to point out that it wasn't Tommy's fault.

C- Excellent material. Film- 'The Umpire'- very good material, but somewhat superficial re: 'the game goes on'- almost a band-aid approach.

C- Squashing anger excercise good- but be careful- this is therapy and perhaps all kids don't need it.

C- Feeling material very good. Most important to help with expression of anger- how appropriate, how a useful energy- what messages are contained in my anger, etc. Saying good-bye to anger, ways of handling anger- excellent excercise.

C- Film- 'The Umpire' was good. Relaxation exercise is good idea, but tighten it up.

O- The activites seemed appropriate to the objectives, and evocative of the feelings sought.

O- Group seems much closer. A couple of kids have trouble with attending skills.

O- Excellent effort to personalize "what feelings did you have".

O- I would like to see how you begin your sessions, how do you start?

O- You handled some of the latent feelings very well. Sound not often audible.

O- It would be more conductive to serious work, privacy, etc. if had a special room- comfortable, quiet, set apart- I would strongly recommend this if possible.

A- Approach excellent, but need time to process eg. film- participants need time to share feelings, not be so rushed.

A- The paper crunching and round table discussions were able to evoke some memories and produce some thought related to objectives.

A- Saying good-bye to anger, ways of handling anger- excellent excercise.

A- Get your questions ready, don't read them (they appear to be more realistic if they are asked spontaneously).

A- Letter and story- excellent approach, but too rushed, therefore, loose impact. Humor- after anger thrown away- very good here but some humor could be drawn out.

A- Need direction/guidance for discussion purposes (ie. on the film).

A- Feeling star excellent use.

A- "How did you feel"- good affective question but you must give the kids the vocabulary to express their feelings.

Session Four

C- Handling of anger excellent- what about handling of sadness, etc.?

C- Can't always understand what children are saying, therefore difficult to evaluate. Children's attention varies- I realize this is a real challenge to keep them interested and on topic. The time is rather long- perhaps 40-45 minutes is all that children of this age can really concentrate for.

C- Content is good.

C- The 'loss tree' and 'grief process' seemed to involve the group in sharing feelings of loss.

C- "Stages of grieving"- shock and denial really comes later. Excellent correction by one boy who said "that's not the first stage- fighting is"- see me for a more useful delineation of stages including pre-divorce, which has often been very troubling for children.

O- This session is definetly on line with program objective in getting at loss and grief as a process.

O- Number three objective handled well- you have given the kids a hook to focus on- letting go of the original family unit. It will be some time longer to be able to cope with the loss of the original family of origin.

O- Always keep in mind that for some children,
divorce <-> loss <-> divorce, etc. They see it as the same thing.

O- Losses- excellent- tremendous need to look at what children experience as loss.

A- Role play very good- expression of feelings too rushed- the purpose of role playing can't be achieved if too rushed.

A- 'Loss Tree'-excellent depicting losses- this exercise a little long- members seemed to lose interest.

A- Chart good- could be more concrete pictures, etc. Circling good, but concepts too abstract.

A- Plasticine work- molding favorite memory- excellent- a welcome activity for self-expression.

A- Be aware that some kids may substitute you or a teacher as a parent. Let the teachers know about their possibility of "parent-transfer".

A- Group discussions and pictorial presentations evoked good response on loss and associated feelings. Good questioning techniques kept the discussions relevant.

Session Five

C- The family pictures were especially evocative of transitions in families- the notion of change being marked by good times as well.

C- Good review at opening. Focus on feelings- do positive as well as negative anger is O.K., but do you also feel happy because there is less fighting?

C- Check your perceptions of kids feelings- they are verbally saying one thing but body language doesn't agree.

C- Good feelings about step-parents.

C- Sharing of family forms excellent. Sharing of family occassions excellent 'before' and 'after' divorce- affirmations of worth of the family.

C- Family specialness exercises very good- positive qualities of family and family fun.

O- Excellent emphasis that divorce is adult decision / children not to blame.

O- To focus on the "rightness" on acceptibility of families other than nuclear is certainly appropriate to program objectives.

O- Reached objectives two and three.

O- Saying good-bye exercise not suitable at this juncture- perhaps more appropriate later.

O- I'm not sure children are able to say goodbye to family unit of origin.

A- The pictures and short answers were useful techniques.

A- If child begins to disclose in a quiet voice, perhaps take the child away and deal privately with the child- he may have a need to discuss his feelings and disclose but may also need to do it privately. Other kids will distract him and use this moment of disclosure wisely.

A- Use visuals- charts, banners for stages, for types of families, include humor eg. If alien from outer space came to earth would find x kinds of families.

A- Use of family photographs- excellent. What if child doesn't have any?

A- Use of words such as 'transition', 'family of origin' too difficult, choose words more suitable eg. 'changed' family.

A- Use of pictures a good technique. You may wish to follow up with "Kinetic Family Drawings" technique- can be very revealing.

A- Audio clearer, but again sometimes I was unable to understand what was said. Perhaps too much per session- children restless- session a bit too long.

A- Review of stages of grieving not done concreately enough- develop visuals to get point across.

Session Six

C- Use of the film was good. The concepts here were valuable, but it is obviously an American production- therefore, it loses some credibility.

C- Being caught in the middle is a very important concept and I'm glad you brought it out. Tie it into coping strategies and 'blaming oneself' for home problems.

C- The discussion of new roles and responsibilities contributed to further understanding of self.

C- Filmstrip- After the Divorce very good re: kinds of changes and feelings experienced by children and parents.

C- Attempt to personalize- very good- need more of this, what did you experience- the therapeutic value of 'sharing the story' also 'what was helpful' a most necessary part.

C- Changing roles- very good, again important to express what was way of coping.

C- Dealing with worries re: divorce excellent - spend time on this again. Healing value in owning, naming and receiving others examples.

O- Excellent attempts to discuss current living arrangements eg. not seeing one parent regularly.

O- Objective one may not be reachable- dependent on each child's perception. Two and three done well. This strategy- coping with change- must be taught. I'm not sure the kids have it.

O- The focus on feelings and strategies related to change were within the scope of objectives.

O- Excellent appreciation shown by leader ie. " Thank-you for sharing...."

O- Keep in mind that during holidays ie. Christmas- child faces additional stress. Very good time to deal with stress coping strategies.

A- The group discussion was excellent here, some real sharing regarding roles and stepparents.

A- Use of worry weight excellent and interesting- really a fine tool too.

A- Brainstorming and "worry weight" seemed productive.

A- Homework 'sharing of worries' with parent excellent idea- how will the parents be prepared?

A- Again that problem of inaudible material, especially (child's name)- this was one of your best.

<u>Session Seven</u>

C- Perhaps designating 'negative' versus 'positive' builds dualistic thinking- rather express the 'negative' feeling then express a 'positive' aspect of that same eg. ' I don't have many friends' may be seen as positive in that 'I have time to read, etc.'

C- Excellent attempt to emphasize 'differentness' as good re: specialness.

C- Idea about being 'special' excellent. Follow-up activities were also good- check some IALAC and other affective education material.

C- Asking children to concentrate and reflect upon their differentness- especially those which are positive allows them to verbalize their worthwhileness.

O- This session's objectives are completely in keeping with overall objectives ie. improvement of self-esteem through an improved understanding of individual uniqueness.

O- Both objectives are very important and handled well. Your participation with the kids in the activities is very good and commendable- shows you are willing to share and take risks.

O- Excellent re: increasing understanding of self and others- building self-esteem. "I am special because..." excellent idea, nice sharing.

A- Re: body shape- what if a child is obese- source of teasing, ridicle to have outline drawn? Alternative might be to draw profile, hands and feet only. Excellent in that the children seem to enjoy the activity.

A- Activities encouraged the children to give thought to self and feelings of self-esteem.

A- Certainly enjoy the painting. Your patience is exemplary- you have a beautiful way with the children.

A- Yes, important to provide offer of further help if any child requires/wishes it. Good preparation for termination.

Session Eight

C- Respect for sameness and differences- perhaps more time needs to be spent on this - seems a major problem in human relationships- our inability to handle differentness -also more might be done re: how to handle, cope, etc. what to do positively in specific situations.

C- Wishes and hopes for the future and letter to each parent excellent.

C- Re: letter- need to go slowly, do one at a time eg. 2-3 things I like about mom- this is a richly therapeutic exercise, take all the time required- decorate it, etc. then do actually send it- how nice for mom and dad to receive.

C- Celebration evening idea- again precious - don't omit would be my recommendation.

C- The sharing of 'goodies' excellent. The children are involved in writing, drinking, eating, etc. They're busy!!

C- Effort is made to focus on the positive in the current relationship and to explore its possibilities.

C- Again, that problem of understanding- some not audible- I missed some content.

O- Life-line exercise excellent especially as to sharing of life story and receiving the others understanding of self and others and improvement of self-concept.

O- All objectives handled very well.

O- This session stresses looking ahead to future possibilities, and honest sharing of feelings about current relationships both of which fit under the consideration of understanding of self and others.

O- The offering of individual counseling if any child needs is excellent and always ethically adviseable. Again, as group facilitator you are very supportive and empathetic.

A- Activities seemed to involve children in considering future possibilities- a furtherance of self understanding. (Audio couldn't be heard well).

A- The children seem to enjoy doing the lifeline and sharing.

A- Moving to table good for a change- moving may remove kids from familiar 'sharing area'. Good way to end, change of scenery and change of pace. Doing great!

A- Excellent personal assistance and showing of drawings. Re: picture drawing at end- for research purposes? You may want to omit this, the letter written and sent makes a nice culminating activity (as you know an exercise loses its value if too rushed and somewhat out of context).

A- Again, you have an excellent way with children- really conducive to work, to positive outcomes. You have ' touched these children, they have grown!'

APPENDIX F

REVISED CHILDREN IN TRANSITION (CIT) PROGRAM

REVISED CHILDREN IN TRANSITION (CIT) PROGRAM

Session 1: Getting Acquainted

Objectives:

1. To establish an atmosphere of support, warmth and fun in the group.
2. To get acquainted and encourage group belongingness.
3. To introduce divorce as a common influence in each of the childrens' lives.
4. To discuss issues of privacy, confidentiality and rules for discussion.

Eye-Opener

Discussion: Group Introductions

Sitting in a circle, the facilitator welcomes the group members and introduces self to the group disclosing some information (e.g., hobbies, family, etc.). Group members introduce her or himself to the group. The facilitator should model the introduction attempting to establish openess and then move around the group giving each member an opportunity to do the same.

Stimulus Activities

Discussion: Purpose of the Group

The counselor explains the purpose of the group: "Many children experience divorce, in fact, each of you have parents that are separated or divorced. We are here to privately share all we can about divorce. Some of the things we will talk about are what divorce means, how it makes us feel, what we can do about the range of feelings, how it affects us and other people in our lives, and problems that we may have because of the divorce."

Invite group members to state one thing they expect to achieve by being in this group.

Discussion: Group Rules

The counselor relates expectations and goals for the group in terms of issues of privacy, confidentiality, rules for discussion, and of the members behavior. The following rules are mentioned and discussed:

(a) Members are not required to say anything in the group unless they choose to and feel comfortable doing so. Members have the right to PASS if they are not ready to share.

(b) Information discussed in the group is private and is not to be shared with people outside the group. If the members wish to speak to their parent(s) about the group, they may do so. However, the children are to talk in general terms about what goes on in the group without passing on individual stories.

(c) Everyone is required to listen, and will be given an equal opportunity to speak.

Activity: Getting Acquainted

Discuss the feelings involved in speaking in a group (e.g., nervous, silly, scared, etc.). To get to know one another, have group members form pairs and spend a few minutes interviewing each other to determine likes, dislikes, hobbies, and family members. Demonstrate the interviewing with a volunteer student. Have group members change partners and form new groups. After the interview have each pair tell the group something about the other.

Activity: Kinetic Family Drawing

The purpose is to gain further information about each member. This gives the member an opportunity to reflect about family members and to draw each in an activity.

Directions: Each member requires a blank piece of paper and a pencil. The group is asked to " draw a picture of your whole family doing something, including you. Try to draw whole people- not stick figures. Remember, make everyone doing something- some kind of action."

Some children may be uncertain as to the limits of his or her family. For the purpose of this program, it is permissable to include the parent not living in the child's home, if the child so wishes. (The members may wish to leave the circle and find an area which is more private and comfortable). Often it is easier to express feelings in a drawing than verbally. Allow enough time so that each member is able to complete the drawing, as this projective experience often provides insight into how the child views his family. Upon completion, ask each child to label each person in the drawing according to their relationship to him, e.g., self, mom, sister, dad, etc. In addition, actions of each figure should be identified and labeled, eg. running, sitting, etc. Invite the members to return to the group and share their pictures. The group counselor should model this sharing with his or her own picture. Members may verbally describe their pictures if they do not wish to share it with the group. The pictures will be collected and later viewed by the counselor for possible indicators.

(5) It is appropriate at this time to talk about the family in transition - as being changed or redefined, rather than being broken. The family structure is different now, changed but not broken. Fathers and mothers remain fathers and mothers even if they do not live with each other. The counselor should explain to the children how this group will help them learn to handle this major change in the family structure. Relate to the children that being in the group means that they need not feel isolated and alone from friends and family. The counselor should reassure the children that there are people who do understand how mixed up and difficult things are when parents divorce, and this group is a good place to share the feelings and concerns of children in transition.

Wrapping-Up Time: Good Thoughts

Ask the children to perform the following exercise until the next session: Each morning before you get up, lie on your back and let your body relax. Make a list of happy thoughts and let these thoughts pass through your mind. Say to yourself three times: "Today is going to be a good day for me. I feel good about myself." At the end of the day, think of the good things that happened that day.

Thank the children for being good listeners. Say good-bye to group members and note next session day and time.

Session 2: Feelings and Defences

Objectives:

1. To learn a centering exercise to get in touch with inside feelings and emotions.
2. To become aware of the importance of feelings and the messages that they are sending.
3. To learn what defences are and to practice ways of lowering defences.

Eye-Opener

Discussion: Sharing Experiences

Review group rules. Stress the importance of listening to the person who is talking.

Ask each member to relate a happy or fun experience they had since the last session. Some members may wish to share a negative or "bad" experience, indicate that this is acceptable.

Activity: Centering Excercise

Encourage each member to find an area in the room where they can sit comfortably, or stretch out on the floor. "Close your eyes...take a deep breathe in and slowly let it out...another big breathe in...and slowly let it out...try to imagine what it would be like to have no feelings...think of floating on a cloud and of seeing nothing but the color white...think to yourself...of how your body feels all white...now think of jumping in a cold swimming pool on a hot summer day...what does your body feel like?...think of the taste of chocolate ice-cream...think of a hug from someone you love....a ride on a roller coaster...having no friends to play with ... speaking in front of the class...having your best friend move away...visiting your grandma...zooming down a water

slide...lying on the beach with the sun on your back...how is your body feeling?... slowly come back to the room...be aware of your breathing...of the sounds of the room...and when you are ready...open your eyes and be here...in the room... together. What feeling did you like best? Where in your body did you feel the cold water? Where did you feel the hug? What feeling did you like least?"

Stimulus Activities

Discussion: Feelings

An important part of getting to know ourselves is to understand our feelings. There are two kinds of feelings. One has to do with physical sensations, like burning our finger, and pulling our finger away from the source of pain. This is a message that our body gives to us on the outside. What about a feeling like happiness or sadness? Sometimes we call them inside feelings, emotions, and these feelings can also protect us. Everyone might have the same feelings but might express them differently. To meet our needs we must first recognize what we are feeling, then we can learn to share our feelings and ask for help if we need to. If I let you know that I am pleased and happy that you share in the group, then you know how I feel, and you know that it is important to me that you share your feelings.

Activity: Sculpting Feelings

All group members (including facilitator) are asked to stand and remember a time when they were happy. "Show that feeling with your whole body: face, hands, arms, legs." Everyone is to look sideways at each other to see how they look when they are happy. Repeat this game, using

feelings suggested by the group members. Have students return to the circle.

Activity: Feeling Star Activity Sheet

Brainstorm the different kinds of feelings and record in the feeling star. Pass out the activity sheet and have the students put their name in the middle of the star. Invite them to circle the feelings that they have experienced specific to the time of their parents' separation and divorce and the present. Invite the children to share and express the feelings they circled. "What feelings are easy to share? Hard to share? Do the things that happen to you affect your feelings and how you act?" Discuss how their parents' separation or divorce has affected their feelings, how they felt initially towards the divorce, how those feelings are changing, are they changing, how do they feel most of the time now?"

Activity: Kinetic Family Drawings

Indicate that last day we talked about the drawings, but that we didn't talk about the feelings in the drawings. Ask the children to share the feelings that each person in the drawing is experiencing.

Discussion: Defences

"Feelings are private so that we don't know what another person is feeling unless they share that feeling with us. Sometimes we cover up our feelings." Ask someone to come up and stand behind the Feeling Star, and to look sad, happy, etc. Ask the rest of the group to guess what that person is feeling. Let the volunteer answer. Point out that standing behind the Feeling Star is like wearing a mask or a defence and that it keeps others from knowing what we are feeling. Ask if they have

ever felt disappointed, hurt or sad and not shown it. How did it feel to hide feelings?

Activity: Defence Masks

Discuss different ways that we behave to hide our feelings. Have each member select a Defence Mask and share when they have used that behavior to hide their real feelings. Ask if they sometimes hide their feelings about their parents' separation and divorce. Invite each member to share the last time they used a mask or defence.

Wrapping-Up Time: Sharing Feelings

Have the members discuss their thoughts and feelings about the group. Discuss what activities they enjoyed and how they feel about being in the group. For homework, have the children tell themselves and another person how they feel at least once a day. Tell the children that you look forward to seeing them next week and end the session on a positive note, for example, you all shared well today or you are all good listeners, etc.

Session 3: Being Told

Objectives:

1. To provide an opportunity for the children to express how they were told of their parents' divorce.
2. To help the children identify and express how they felt about their parents' divorce.
3. To allow expression of angry feelings the children may have towards their parents in relation to the divorce.

Eye-Opener

Activity: Reviewing Feelings

Review feelings from last session. Post the "Feeling Star" to visually make available the range of feelings. Discuss something important that happened in each family since the last session.

Stimulus Activities

Film: THE UMPIRE (17 minutes: National Film Board of Canada)

Show the film "The Umpire". This film is about a nine-year old boy named Phillip who has to deal with the fact that his father is suddenly not there to be an umpire at his regular Saturday morning baseball game. His younger brother is more interested about getting into Phillip's game than he is in missing his father. Phillip also has to face his teammates without his father-umpire. In the end, although the game is a success, Phillip and his brother learn from their mother that their father will no longer be living with them. This film is short and intense. It depicts some of the feelings children experience when they are told of their parent's decision to separate.

Discussion: Feelings About Being Told

After the film, discuss the following questions: What feelings did Phillip experience in the film? What feeling did he experience most? What do you think Phillip's mom was feeling? What do you think his brother was feeling? What feelings did you experience during the film? Did you share some of the feelings of Phillip in the film when you were told that your parents were getting a divorce?

Activity: Centering Exercise

"Sitting comfortably...I want you to close your eyes...take a deep breath in and slowly let it out...another breath in...and slowly let it out...I want you to imagine that you are travelling back to the time when you were told of your Mom and Dad's separation...what was it like?..(pause for reflection)...can you remember who was there?...who told you?...can you remember what they said?...how did you feel at the time?...what did you do?...did you cry?...how do you think your parents felt?...slowly come back to the room...be aware of your breathing...and when you are ready...open your eyes and be here...in the room ... together."

Invite the children to share how they were told of their parent's separation. Have them identify and share the feelings that they experienced at that time.

Activity: Karen and Tommy's Story

Read to the group Karen and Tommy's story. Ask the children how they think Karen is feeling? Tommy is feeling? Who is Tommy angry at? Who is Karen angry at? What can Karen do to cope with her angry feelings? What

can Tommy do? What are some appropriate ways for Karen or Tommy to handle their anger?

Activity: Anger Release

Have the students close their eyes and think of the anger they may have towards their parents for getting separated or divorced. Ask them to see their anger, to hear it, to feel it. Have the children imagine that their anger is a newspaper. Invite them to scrunch up a newspaper and put their anger (the paper) into a big garbage bag. Tie the garbage bag up and have the children say goodbye to their anger.

Discussion: Anger Messages

Many of the children will express feelings of sadness or anger. Discuss with the group ways in which they cope with their feelings of anger. Discuss the messages in their anger (e.g., I'm afraid, I'm hurt). Brainstorm possible ways of expressing anger. Discuss good ways to handle anger (count to ten, take three deep breaths, running, pounding a pillow, riding a bike) and poor ways to handle anger (hitting, breaking things, throwing a temper tantrum, blaming, holding it inside). Stress that is okay to feel angry as long as you don't hurt yourself, others or property. Brainstorm the consequences of each idea. "What would happen if I did this?" To help the children explore appropriate ways of expressing anger, instruct the children to ask three questions for each idea. "Will I hurt myself? Will I hurt someone else? Will I get in trouble?" Explain that if they can answer no to all three then it is an appropriate way to express anger. Discuss that to cope with anger it is helpful to (1) recognize our own feelings of anger (2) use the energy of anger in a good way, and (3) share it by telling someone how we feel.

Activity: "Dear Mom... Dear Dad..."

Indicate to the children that the memory of being told of their parents' separation will probably last for a long time. It was a difficult time, and that it is normal to feel all kinds of powerful feelings and emotions. Indicate that it is okay to feel these emotions. Ask them to try to remember that their parents were in pain too, and to try to forgive them. Invite the children to write a letter to one or both of their parents about how they felt when they were told about the separation or divorce. Indicate that it is okay to write about all their feelings, including anger. Have them write about any unanswered questions that they may wish to ask about the divorce. Indicate that the letters will be put in a pretend mailbox and not actually given to the parents, unless they so wish.

Wrapping-Up Time: Sharing Anger

Affirm group members for working hard and for sharing well. For homework, have each group member choose an appropriate method to deal with anger and ask them to try using this method the next time they feel angry.

Handout: Session Three

Karen's Story

Karen was nine years old when she learned about her parents decision to separate. Karen was in the living room reading a book when she heard her father and mother screaming at each other. She heard her father screaming names at her mother and then slamming the front door and leaving. Karen ran after her dad, but he was already in the car and was pulling out of the driveway. She wanted to tell him to come back, but she knew that he wouldn't listen to her, he was too angry. Karen felt very scared, and she started to cry. Her mother told her that it would be okay, but things haven't been okay, they've been miserable. Karen misses her dad and only sees him when he has time. She feels very sad and angry that he would run out on her like he did.

Tommy's Story

Tommy was twelve years old when he found out about his parents' decision to divorce. His father told him one day after hockey practice that he would be moving out soon. He remembers thinking that he will never be able to play hockey again, what will his friends think? Are they going to think that I am different? Are they going to still like me? Tommy begged his dad to stay and he started to cry. Tommy wondered if he had done something wrong. He thought that if he practiced real hard and was as good as Gretzky maybe his parents would stay together. Tommy's feelings of guilt and shame stayed inside, and soon he felt like he could explode. He was so angry at his parents for doing this to him.

Session 4: Divorce and the Grief Process

Objectives:

1. To explore losses experienced through divorce.

2. To normalize the grieving process through a discussion of the stages of grieving.

3. To provide an opportunity for group members to express their grief of the loss of the family of origin.

Eye-Opener

Activity: Role-playing

Have group members role-play Karen's or Tommy's story and take turns playing different parts. Discuss the losses that Karen or Tommy may have felt.

Stimulus Activities

Activity: Loss Tree Worksheet

Distribute copies of the "Loss Tree" and discuss the possible losses associated with divorce. (See following page.) Ask group members to circle the losses that they have experienced. Invite group members to share the losses they have experienced through parental separation or divorce. Explain that there is growth through loss (thus the tree) and have group members brainstorm ways in which they have grown.

Discussion: Losses and Grief

"When you were told of your parent's decision to divorce you may have experienced feelings of shock or disbelief. Do you remember feeling, 'How could this happen to me?'. By having these feelings the process of grieving over your loss through divorce was beginning. The word process usually means stages to which there is some sort of end."

Invite group members to share the losses and grief that they may have experienced in the death of a relative, friend or pet. Disuss how they thought or felt at various times after the event. Ask if divorce is similar to death or other losses they may have experienced ie. a pet that ran away, or a friend moving, etc. Explain that people who go through loss, whether through death, or divorce, or whatever, tend to go through stages in their thinking and feeling and that it is normal and okay to experience a wide range of feelings.

Activity: Children of Divorce Grief Process

Distribute copies of the "Children of Divorce Grief Process" worksheet. Discuss the stages of grieving involved in parental divorce. Invite group members to share the various feelings that they have experienced and where they think they are in the grieving process. Discuss coping strategies group members have developed and experienced at each stage.

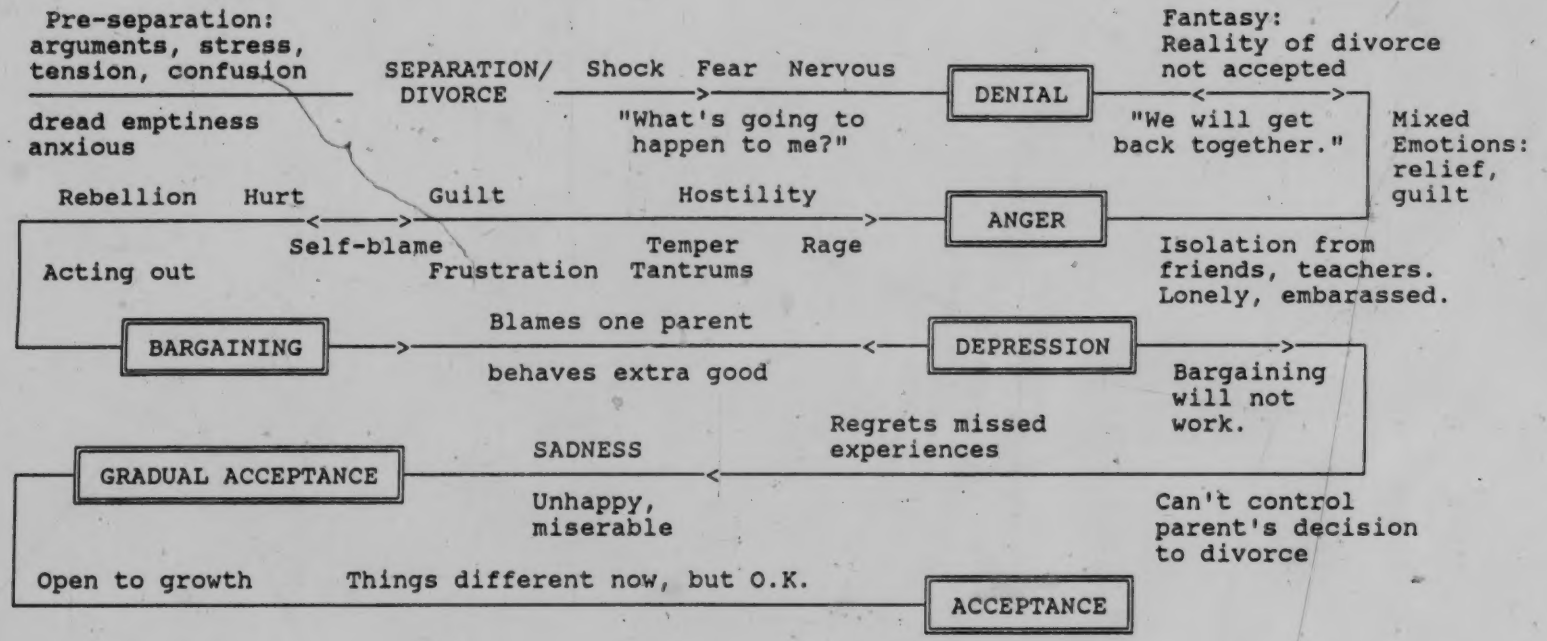
Activity: Family Memories

Have group members use plasticine to mold one of their favorite memories with their family of origin. Allow time for members to reflect and to work quietly. Have group members discuss their favorite memory and invite them to share their feelings of loss about other favorite family memories.

Wrapping-Up Time: Homework

For homework, ask group members to bring favorite family photographs of their family of origin and of their changed family for next session. Thank the group for sharing their thoughts, feelings and experiences.

CHILDREN OF DIVORCE GRIEF PROCESS MODEL
(9 to 12 years age group)
WHELAN (1989)



Note: Not everyone goes through every stage or in the same order.

Session 5: Family Specialness

Objectives:

1. To provide an opportunity for group members to share favorite family occassions and photographs of the family of origin.
2. To help group members become aware of the variety of family units and to focus on the positive qualities of their families.
3. To assure the children that divorce is an adult decision and that children are not to blame.

Eye Opener

Activity: Family Photographs

Review the stages of grieving and ask group members to share where they think they are most of the time now. Reaffirm to the group that a wide range of feelings are to be expected and that acceptance does eventually come. Invite group members to share their favorite family occasions and photographs of the family before the separation or divorce. Allow the children to express their feelings about their changed familiy.

Stimulus Activities

Discussion: Family Uniqueness

Brainstorm the different kinds of families (one-parent, two-parents, stepmother-father, stepfather-mother, mom-grandparents, etc.). Indicate that each family is different and that one family is not better than another; that there isn't any right number of members to be in a family, and that all families are special. Emphasize that families provide care and love and that no two families are alike because all the individuals

in the family are special. Invite group members to discuss their family and how family members show each other care and love.

Relate that it is important to remember that children are not to blame or responsible for their parents' decision to separate or divorce. Invite the members to share their feelings on why they might feel they are to blame. Reassure group members that divorce is an adult decision.

Activity: Family Specialness Worksheet

Have group members fill out the worksheet and invite them to share their answers. Have group members generate positive statements about their family and invite them to share their statements with the group.

Activity: Family Fun

Have group members use plasticine to mold a happy or special time with their changed family. Discuss what the family is doing and the feelings of each family member. Provide the opportunity for group members to share anything they want to about their family.

Wrapping-Up Time: Planning Family Fun

For homework, ask the group members to plan something fun that their families can share together over the next week. Have group members share their choice with the group.

Activity: Session Five

Family Specialness

1. The members of my family are...

2. The best things about my family are that...

3. Things my family do together are...

4. Things my family do to make me feel special are...

5. Three positive things about each family member are...

Session 6: Changing Roles and Coping Skills

Objectives:

1. To explore and gain an understanding of each child's perspective on their changed family.
2. To encourage discussion related to change in roles, responsibilities and needs within the family.
3. To provide an opportunity to discuss the benefits and difficulties of custodial arrangements and steparents.
4. To provide opportunities for group members to discuss various ways of coping with change.

Eye-Opener

Filmstrip: AFTER THE DIVORCE (7 minutes)

This filmstrip describes the various feelings connected with the changes and period of adjustment following parental separation or divorce. After the filmstrip discuss the kinds of changes and feelings that the children in the filmstrip had experienced. Invite group members to share how they have changed and the changes in their life since the separation or divorce (e.g., vacations, new school, Christmas, new home, etc.). Encourage group members to express their way of coping with the changes. Explore and acknowledge the existence of various strengths to confront change (e.g.,. what has helped, what have they done to cope, etc.).

Stimulus Activities

Activity: Roles/Responsibilities

Brainstorm ways in which roles/responsibilites change when there is a change in family structure. Make a list of the responsibilities family

members had before and after the divorce. Discuss roles/responsibilities that group members would like to be in more often or less often.

Discussion: Blended Families

Discuss how step-parents are portrayed in fairy tales (e.g., Cinderella, Hansel and Gretel, etc.). Invite group members to discuss their feelings related to boy/girl friends; steparents; step-brothers or step-sisters; custodial arrangements, etc. Discuss current living arrangements and how they are working out.

Activity: The Worry Weight

Pass around the worry weight and have group members share something about the divorce that worries them. Ask if any one else had that worry. Encourage sharing of feelings. Discuss the things that they can change and the things they can not. Brainstorm a list of possible divorce-related problems and possible solutions. (Refer to the list to generate discussion). Have group members role-play some of the situations and possible solutions. Have group members reherse or role-play questions that they would like to discuss with their Mom or Dad that they have not been able to.

Wrapping-Up Time: Sharing Worries

Invite group members to share a fun or interesting activity that they are planning with their families. For homework, ask group members to share their feelings with their Mom or Dad about something that worries them about the divorce.

Activity: Session Six

Possible Divorce-Related Problems

1. Dad promises to take Jason to the show on Saturday, but phones on Saturday morning to say that he can't make it. Jason feels disappointed and very angry because his Dad forgot to take him to the baseball game last week. Jason refuses to talk to his Dad on the phone and says that he never wants to see him again. What solution could there be to this misunderstanding?

2. Joanne feels that her step-mother pays more attention to her step-sister than she does to Joanne. Joanne tells her father how she feels but can't tell her step-mother. Joanne feels lonely and sad and starts to cry whenever her step-mother asks her to do some chores around the house. What are different ways for Joanne to handle her feelings of hurt?

3. Scott feels embarrassed that his parents are divorced. He just moved to a new school and he is afraid that the other kids will find out that his parents are divorced. He plays by himself at school but he feels very lonely. What are other ways that Scott could handle this situation?

4. Susan spends some days at her Mom's house and some days at her Dad's house. Sometimes she doesn't know when she is going to be staying at each parent's house and often forgets her homework. Susan is getting behind in her school work and she is worried that her next report card will not be very good. What could Susan do to solve her problem in this situation?

Session 7: Specialness

Objectives:

This session is devoted to self-esteem to help group members-

1. Understand that everyone is unique and special.

2. Recognize special qualities in him/her self and others.

Eye-Opener

Activity: I Am Special Worksheet

Discuss with the group members some of the "worries" that they may have discussed with their Mom or Dad. Indicate that each of the group members is special by touching them on the shoulder and saying "Here is a special person" to each child. Discuss what special means and how we become special (e.g.,different, unique, life experiences, parents, friends, what others say about us, how we feel, etc.). Discuss the concept of self-esteem (the view a person has of him or her self; what a person believes about themself). Pass out the "I am special because..." worksheet in which the counselor has written something special about each member. Pass the sheet around until each person has written a compliment or something special about that person on the sheet. When the sheets have been returned to their owners indicate to the group members that part of the way to develop healthy self-esteem is to receive compliments from each other and that compliments help us feel good about ourselves. Have members share some of the compliments on their sheets. Discuss when they feel special or loved in their family. Who makes them feel loved? How do they do this?

Stimulus Activities

Activity: Tracing Self Outlines

Take turns tracing a full-length outline of one another on paper or each others profile, hands and feet on paper. Have group members write down some things they do not like about themselves on one side (ie. I don't have many friends, etc.) and help them to reframe a positive aspect of that feeling (ie. I have time to read, etc.). Invite group members to share one thing from their list. Have them write statements that say "I am _____ in a positive way (helpful, friendly, nice, etc.). Have group members tell one positive thing about another group member and invite them to give themselves a compliment out loud. Have group members fill in the rest of the outline with favorite foods, likes, dislikes, favorite shows, books, etc. and then paint or color their outlines. Discuss some similarities and differences in light of being special. Have group members paint their self outlines or profiles.

Wrapping-Up Time: Group Termination

So that the termination process might begin, remind group members that the next session will be the last group meeting. Ask group members if there are issues that they would like to further discuss in the last session. Indicate to the group members that the counselor will be available to discuss any issues, problems or worries individually if group members so wish. Close the group with comments relating to the hard work that went into the success of the sessions.

Session 8: Looking Ahead

Objectives:

1. To address any concerns or questions that may have come up from previous sessions.
2. To focus on how group members see themselves in the future.
3. To affirm the positive in the changed family and in each parent.
4. To evaluate the progam and to say good-bye to the group.

Eye-Opener

Activity: Lifeline Worksheet

Have the students draw a life-line which includes all the important events in their life starting from their birth. Stress that the important events are to consist of both positive and negative ones. Include self in activity and model the explanation of own life-line. Have them draw a sun at the end of their life-line and section it off into two. Ask them to draw a picture of what they think they will be doing 5 and 10 years from now. Brainstorm for ideas. Discuss similarities and differences in their lives and that it is possible to overcome negative events and to look forward to the future. Discuss coping strategies and positive ways of handling difficult life events. Invite each member to share their wishes and hopes for the future. (This is a good time to share cookies and juice).

Stimulus Activities

Activity: Family Letters

Invite group members to write a letter to each parent. In the letter have group members include three things they like about their Mother and their Father; their real feelings about the divorce and three best wishes. Invite group members to discuss the content of their letters and allow time to decorate their special letter. Have the group members stress the positives of each parent and ask them to let parents know how they are doing; how they enjoyed the sessions, how they were helpful, etc. (Dr. R.M. Hague, Univeristy of Alberta, 1987). Indicate to the children that their letters will be presented to their parents on the celebration evening.

Wrapping-Up Time: Program Evaluation

Have group members complete a program evaluation form.

Close the group by complimenting group members on sharing their thoughts and feelings. Invite the members to see you individually if they have any areas they wish to discusss privately.